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President: Mr. Matjila (Vice-President) ..... (South Africa)

Contents

Opening of the segment

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Matjila (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Opening of the segment

1. **The President**, opening the humanitarian affairs segment on the theme "Restoring humanity, respecting human dignity and leaving no one behind: working together to reduce people's humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability", said that the segment was a unique forum for promoting a better understanding of the complex nature of humanitarian needs and the operational challenges faced in delivering humanitarian assistance. It also provided a major opportunity for Member States and humanitarian partners to discuss how to further strengthen the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance to respond to record levels of need and how to overcome obstacles to reaching those in need.

2. Three high-level panels would be held during the course of the segment: the first would address the impact of armed conflict on children and ways to strengthen the response to meet children's needs; the second would reflect on the challenges, risks and impacts of extreme weather events and climate change on the most vulnerable; and the third would focus on ways to strengthen local capabilities for sustainable outcomes and local resilience and the contribution of humanitarian action in that regard.

3. Humanitarian partners delivered assistance to some of the most vulnerable people on the planet. Human dignity was an important component of humanitarian action, the aim of which was not just to save lives but to empower people to live their lives with dignity and give them an opportunity to rebuild their resilience. In line with the 100th anniversary of the birth of Nelson Mandela and the importance that his own country, South Africa, attached to the issue of children, he wished to show a short video highlighting the centrality of children in Nelson Mandela's work, in the hope that it would inspire concrete action.

4. *A short video featuring Nelson Mandela was shown.*

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (A/73/78–E/2018/54)

5. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/73/78-E/2018/54), said that the global humanitarian system was more effective than ever and was saving lives and protecting people on a scale never previously achieved. Response plans were more coordinated, comprehensive and innovative, and there was greater emphasis on anticipatory approaches and early action. Technological advances were propelling swifter, more nimble aid responses. The quality and timeliness of funding had improved, commitments for multi-year and pooled funding had allowed timely and effective action on the ground, and contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund and the country-based pooled funds had reached a record high in 2017.

6. Despite the progress made, the humanitarian system remained under strain. More than 134 million people needed humanitarian assistance, almost three times more than a decade before. Humanitarian organizations were targeting 96 million of the most vulnerable people for help in 2018 but, thus far, only $8 billion of the $25 billion required had been received. Conflicts had increased in number and intensity, and the number of internally displaced persons was rising. In 2017 alone, natural disasters had affected more than 96 million people and caused more than $300 billion in damage, the second highest economic losses on record.

7. To keep pace, the system needed to adapt and improve continually, which called for strengthened collaboration and partnerships. The Secretary-General's reform of the United Nations sought to increase the Organization's effectiveness and help reduce some of the underlying drivers of humanitarian crises. The aim of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to leave no one behind, incorporated the recognition that humanitarian crises threatened to reverse the development progress made in recent decades. The system had a major opportunity to change course and it must take it. But to be successful, serious problems needed to be addressed, including conflict and the behavior of belligerents in war; the scourge of protracted food crises; the growing number of forcibly displaced persons; and the need for a more anticipatory financing model to meet needs amid growing intensity and frequency of natural disasters caused by climate change.

8. In an environment increasingly marked by conflict, neutral and impartial humanitarian action was more important than ever. The brutality of modern wars was an outrage. Civilians were deliberately killed with shocking intensity and frequency, and international humanitarian law and the fundamental rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution were disregarded with apparent impunity. The international community must do more to ensure that political actors and fighting parties respected international

humanitarian law and the norms intended to protect civilians in conflict.

9. Collective and coordinated efforts were needed to improve food security. Some 124 million people needed food assistance, and droughts in the Sahel region had left 5.8 million people in urgent need of food and livelihood assistance, but response efforts were underfunded. Better and lasting solutions were also needed to help internally displaced persons. In line with General Assembly resolution 72/182, States needed to strengthen their efforts to explore ways to better address the needs of internally displaced persons and their host communities.

10. Addressing the latest challenges required a move towards more anticipatory action and a greater join-up in the response. Given that disasters and emergencies were largely predictable, adjustments to the way of operating could reduce their impacts. Anticipatory and early action concerned the delivery of assistance as well as the way in which emergency preparedness and early response were financed. Drawing on lessons learned from the 2015–2016 El Niño response, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was exploring options to apply more anticipatory data-driven models of allocating funding, including through the Central Emergency Response Fund, to kickstart early action and prevent hazards from becoming fully-fledged disasters. Partnerships with Governments, regional organizations, insurance firms, international financial institutions and local organizations were invaluable to that approach.

11. There were no humanitarian solutions to humanitarian crises; the solutions lay in the realms of peace and security, politics and development. The system must ensure the highest standards of behaviour towards those it served. In that context, active measures were being taken to eliminate the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. In line with the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance approach, the Organization was committed to ensuring that people in crises felt safe and respected and had access to the assistance they needed without fear of exploitation or abuse by any aid worker.

12. **Ms. Elgarf** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that General Assembly resolution 46/182 remained the global framework for coordinating humanitarian assistance. The Group of 77 and China was concerned at the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures that were contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It called on all States and parties to comply with international humanitarian law to protect and assist civilians, including in occupied territories, and to respect the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

13. International cooperation and support remained indispensable but should seek to strengthen local and national mechanisms, rather than undermine or replace them, so that Governments could respond promptly and effectively and drive positive change. Affected States had a primary role and should take the lead in initiating, organizing and coordinating humanitarian assistance. He welcomed the elements of the draft resolution that built on the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the New Urban Agenda; the draft resolution should capitalize on the Council's economic, social and development functions as well as the operational and technical aspects of its work.

14. Amid growing humanitarian need, the Group called for additional, predictable, innovative and diversified humanitarian financing from all sources, including other Member States, organizations and the private sector, to help developing countries enhance their capacities and mobilize their own resources. In particular, it encouraged the United Nations system to use anticipatory financing mechanisms to support effective and timely humanitarian assistance. Insufficient diversity in geographical representation and gender balance in the composition of United Nations humanitarian staff must be addressed. The necessary statistics on humanitarian staff should be readily available, as well as information on what was being done to address those gaps.

15. Relief, recovery, rehabilitation, reconstruction and longer-term development were complementary, and coordination of humanitarian assistance was therefore vital. The humanitarian-development divide must be narrowed but it was important not to blur the line that separated the mandates and priorities of each. The Group of 77 and China was convinced that there was a way for humanitarian and development actors to work more closely together while performing their respective roles effectively, in accordance with their comparative advantages.

16. **Ms. Stoeva** (Observer for Bulgaria), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that addressing the challenges facing the humanitarian system would require strong political leadership and

decisive global action on conflict prevention and resolution, climate change, advancing the 2030 Agenda, turning early warning into early action and building the resilience of vulnerable populations.

17. A forward-looking humanitarian system that mobilized targeted resources in a more systematic way would be better able to anticipate crises and disasters. Financing and implementing early action could save lives, avoid unnecessary suffering and lead to more effective humanitarian preparedness and response. Coherence and cooperation in the operationalization of the humanitarian-development nexus must be improved, while respecting humanitarian principles.

18. The European Union and its member States would continue to advocate for the protection of populations affected by conflict and respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as enhanced efforts to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian and medical personnel. People should be at the centre of humanitarian action; the needs of marginalized groups must be addressed; and women, girls, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups must be involved throughout the response cycle. It was vital that States delivered on the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit and the commitments made under the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing.

19. With regard to forced displacement, measures were needed to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions and establish conditions for safe return to countries of origin. Addressing internal displacement should also be a priority.

20. She welcomed the increased focus on children, youth, older persons and disabilities in the draft resolution to be considered by the Council as well as improvements with regard to early warning and early action, internally displaced persons and education. Nonetheless, the European Union and its member States had hoped for more progress in the areas of international humanitarian law and unhindered humanitarian access, including with regard to the impact of counter-terrorism measures on the delivery of principled humanitarian aid. Of particular concern was the regression in Council discussions on sexual and reproductive health, given that such services were a life-saving measure. In that connection, the failure to reach an agreement on the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health was regrettable.

21. **Ms. Gill** (Observer for Australia), speaking also on behalf of Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Turkey (referred to as MIKTA), said that conflict and natural disasters around the world continued to inflict human suffering and displacement on an unprecedented scale and were preventing the achievement of a peaceful world capable of achieving sustainable development. Swift action was urgently needed. Member States and other stakeholders needed to work across different sectors and regions to ensure a collective response to humanitarian emergencies. Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia stood ready to share best practices during a segment that provided an important opportunity to make progress on operational and normative issues on the humanitarian policy agenda.

22. The call to action set out in the Agenda for Humanity must be heard. Those five countries supported accelerated implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, which meant, among other things, anticipating crises instead of just waiting for them. To save lives and protect assets, States must do more to ensure that development investment was risk-informed; facilitate public-private partnerships; enable risk-based investment; invest in preparedness before a crisis; and provide incentives to reward risk-informed local and national early action.

23. At the World Humanity Summit, gender equality, fulfilment of the human rights of women and girls, and their empowerment in political, humanitarian and development spheres at all levels had been affirmed as a universal responsibility. The promise of the Sustainable Development Goals could not be realized for all women and girls if they were not included in humanitarian action as decision makers. In addition, humanitarian response must be non-discriminatory and inclusive of persons with disabilities.

24. **Mr. Margaryan** (Observer for Armenia) said that restoring humanity and respecting human dignity were priorities, and the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in humanitarian action must be upheld. Unimpeded humanitarian access was vital; attempts to politicize it and refusals to cooperate constituted a deliberate attempt to hinder efforts to protect and assist those in need.

25. Community engagement remained a priority in overall coordination of response. The Mission of Armenia had hosted a panel discussion that morning on the role of social media and information and communications technologies in engaging populations affected by crisis. As the deliberations had shown, digital communications channels were helping millions of people to remain in contact and providing access to vital information, and technology-based solutions were rapidly changing the landscape of humanitarian response. The United Nations system needed to do more

to engage those populations and support those who helped ensure their voices were heard. In that regard, Armenia strongly condemned all forms of violence or threats against reporters and media workers, including citizen journalists and bloggers.

26. It was critical for the United Nations to adapt its prevention function and build greater resilience. As a consistent supporter of the concept and practice of prevention, Armenia welcomed the increased focus on early action; denial of past crimes and hate speech were among the warning signs of the potential for mass atrocity crimes and conflict.

27. Crimes that went unpunished were prone to recurrence. Armenia had been leading the campaign within the United Nations to reinforce implementation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Armenia also hosted an annual global forum against the crime of genocide, which, in 2018, would focus on the role of education in eliminating hatred, intolerance and xenophobia. Every year, it bestowed a national award on an outstanding humanitarian and every year on 9 December, it marked the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime.

28. Lastly, the international community needed to do more collectively to mitigate crisis situations, and civil society efforts should be supported at the global level, given their important contribution to humanitarian and development response.

29. **Ms. Carenza** (Italy) said that collective action was the only effective way to tackle global challenges such as protracted crises and cyclical natural disasters. Italy supported a holistic, results-based and person-centred approach to humanitarian action that involved coordination among humanitarian stakeholders, comprehensive joint needs assessments and national and local ownership.

30. The most vulnerable people, including minors, persons with disabilities, older persons and women, must be protected in emergency situations. International humanitarian principles must be respected; attacks on civilian premises such as schools and medical facilities contravened international humanitarian law, and those responsible must be held accountable. The provision of humanitarian access was a sensitive topic but it was an obligation under international humanitarian law and had a crucial impact on the effectiveness of humanitarian aid. Italy also strongly supported mine action, which was an imperative in many conflict and post-conflict situations.

31. The challenges posed by forced displacement required short-term action focused on security and solidarity, and a long-term vision that addressed root causes. Italy promoted an approach that was based on common and shared responsibilities. It viewed Africa as a partner for economic cooperation and an ally in the fight against terrorism and organized crime.

32. By strengthening the connections between development and humanitarian tools, the international community was enhancing its capacity to tackle the root causes of crises and to link relief and rehabilitation to development. Empowering local responders was critical to improving efficiency. Italy was implementing the commitment undertaken at the World Humanitarian Summit to go as local as possible by funding local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) directly. Italy had increased its humanitarian aid budget in recent years, and welcomed innovative funding mechanisms that would encourage social investment from the private sector.

33. Humanitarian action was not a substitute for political solutions. Her delegation strongly supported the sustaining peace approach promoted by the Secretary-General and his appeal to strengthen partnerships in all areas. In that regard, the fundamental role played by women in peacebuilding and stabilization must not be forgotten.

34. **Mr. Prongthura** (Observer for Thailand) said that humanitarian crises persisted around the world, and the most vulnerable were the hardest hit. To address those crises in a comprehensive and integrated manner, a paradigm shift was required at all levels and especially on the ground. The affected Member State, while remaining primarily responsible for the humanitarian situation in its territory, should, together with the United Nations and relevant humanitarian and development actors, promote and ensure full respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. The protection of civilians and humanitarian workers was a priority. Attacks on hospitals and schools must not be tolerated, nor must abuse, gender-based violence or other misconduct, especially when perpetrated by those who had been sent to help. Coordination among agencies providing humanitarian relief must be strengthened, particularly in country teams, and their work should reinforce national and local capacity, not replace it. Most importantly, people must be at the heart of all efforts, from relief through to development. It was vital to create resilient communities that had the opportunity to participate in decisions about their future.

35. Situated in the most disaster-prone region of the world, Thailand attached great importance to effective

and timely disaster management. The highest priority was accorded to building self-resilience and preparedness through its Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, and to fostering sustainable development based on moderation, reasonableness and prudence. Thailand had been working with the other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to expedite the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response and would be hosting one of the three satellite warehouses under the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN. Thailand viewed investing in early warning infrastructure and building resilience as the way forward. It had contributed on various occasions to funds such as the Central Emergency Response Fund and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

36. **Ms. Blais** (Canada) said that the number of humanitarian crises had reached unprecedented levels. Canada was extremely concerned by the use of sexual and gender-based violence, famine and denial of humanitarian access as weapons of war. The international community needed to recommit to upholding humanitarian principles and ensuring respect for international humanitarian law. International humanitarian law was a key pillar of the current rules-based international order, yet parties to armed conflict were increasingly violating those rules with apparent impunity. The Group of Seven, under the Canadian presidency, had recently committed to helping increase the capacity of State and non-State partners to implement international humanitarian law effectively if they became parties to conflicts. Canada urged other Member States to make similar commitments.

37. The growing problem of forced displacement must be tackled in a comprehensive manner. Canada was actively promoting the global compacts on refugees and migration, both of which were important given the correlation between the rise in the number of violent conflicts and the rise in displacement. In order to find durable solutions and better address the root causes of forced displacement, the international community must work together and share responsibility for better addressing the needs of all forcibly displaced persons and host communities.

38. It was imperative to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable, including girls and boys, who were especially vulnerable to violence and to recruitment by armed forces, and persons with disabilities. Her delegation urged Member States that had not yet done so to endorse the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

39. Lastly, all humanitarian action must be gender-responsive. Women and adolescent girls were powerful agents of change. The Whistler Declaration on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action, adopted by the Group of Seven on 2 June 2018, emphasized the importance of supporting their meaningful participation. It was also important to respond to specific needs when addressing vulnerabilities, including by supporting initiatives on preventing and responding to gender-based violence. The Group of Seven had committed to closing gaps in education quality for women and girls living in conflict and crisis, including refugees and displaced persons. That undertaking had been accompanied by an historic investment of $3.8 billion Canadian dollars, including $400 million from Canada alone.

40. **Mr. Besson** (Observer for Switzerland) said that humanitarian workers were finding it extremely difficult to preserve the necessary space to conduct their operations. They had to contend with countless violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, a lack of access to those in need, counter-terrorism measures that contravened humanitarian principles, and deliberate attacks on medical personnel. All parties to conflict must respect international humanitarian law and human rights. In that connection, Switzerland hoped that the process it was facilitating in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross to strengthen respect for international humanitarian law would make a difference.

41. Security Council resolution 2286 (2016) must be fully implemented. Attacks on medical personnel and facilities had devastating consequences for human life and infrastructure. Counter-terrorism measures must not criminalize the provision of medical aid under any circumstances.

42. Although General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system made no reference to humanitarian aid, such reform would probably have an impact on the work of humanitarian coordinators and therefore on United Nations humanitarian action. The development system must therefore increase the synergies between peace, development, humanitarian and human rights actors with a view to achieving joint objectives wherever possible. In most protracted crises, tools were used in parallel and within the same geographical area. It was now important to strengthen the links between the different types of intervention to enhance the effectiveness and impact of joint action. At the same time, however, space must be preserved to enable humanitarian action to continue in accordance with its founding principles.

43. Lastly, Switzerland was pleased that consensus had been reached on the draft resolution to be considered at the close of the segment. A co-facilitator of the draft resolution, her delegation welcomed the strengthened language on responding to needs in the areas of education, disasters and the prevention of gender-based violence. As the draft resolution still did not address all the challenges of humanitarian crises, she nonetheless expressed the hope that Council members would overcome their differences in the next round of negotiations.

44. **Mr. Lindroos** (Observer for Finland) said that it was a time of increased humanitarian needs caused by conflict and natural disasters. Some regions were worse hit than others, but everyone had a responsibility to ensure assistance reached those most in need. Although the humanitarian aid system was more advanced and better equipped than ever before, it was a challenge to find the necessary resources. An even greater challenge, however, was to find better ways to prevent disaster and end conflict and ensure that international humanitarian law was respected. Unimpeded and timely humanitarian access was essential for the safety of aid workers and recipients of humanitarian assistance. Finland was deeply concerned by the rising number of violations of international humanitarian law; there was a serious risk of growing indifference and disregard for basic principles. Finland called on States and other actors to use their influence to reverse that negative trend and would like to see stronger collective action from the international community in that regard.

45. The theme of respecting human dignity and leaving no one behind was a powerful reminder that more must be done to address the situation of persons with disabilities in humanitarian emergencies. The annual meeting of the Global Alliance on Disability Network, held in Helsinki in early 2018, had sent a strong signal about the collective determination of Governments, international organizations and civil society organizations to continue to place greater emphasis on disability in international development and humanitarian efforts. His delegation was very encouraged by the Secretary-General's decision to request an internal review of the overall approach of the United Nations towards disability and looked forward to the completion in 2018 of the guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. Guidance on disability in humanitarian aid operations funded by the European Union had also been drafted. Change was under way and was certainly possible if there was a will and a willingness to undertake it.

46. Humanitarian response must reflect the particular risks and challenges that women and girls faced during emergencies. Finland would continue to support action aimed at addressing sexual and gender-based violence and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights. His delegation also welcomed the commitment of aid organizations to addressing sexual abuse by aid workers.

47. Improvements in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and the inclusion of persons with disabilities had proved that progress was still possible with approximately the same level of funding. It was undeniable, however, that a stronger collective effort would be needed to meet the financial requirements created by a rising number of protracted humanitarian crises. A considerable amount of the funding contributed by Finland consisted of multi-year core funding, which increased its impact. Finland encouraged more countries to participate in global efforts to help those affected by conflict and natural disasters. In that connection, the Central Emergency Response Fund was a particularly useful tool for non-traditional humanitarian donors to show their willingness to participate.

48. **Mr. Salarzai** (Afghanistan) said that humanitarian crises around the world were raising serious concerns about the protection of civilians and human rights and were impeding achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The emergency landscape in Afghanistan was one of the most complex and challenging in the world. The long-standing nature of the conflict, in addition to terrorism and violent extremism, had led to a high number of civilian casualties and disabilities, while deliberate attacks on civilian sites such as schools and hospitals had exacerbated the humanitarian crisis. Another consequence of the conflict was the protracted situation of refugees and internally displaced persons; in the past three months, Afghanistan had received over 200,000 voluntary repatriations, deportees and refugees, whose basic needs must be met.

49. A drought had officially been declared by the Government in April 2018. It was affecting two thirds of the country and threatened the lives and livelihoods of at least 2 million people, who were in dire need of humanitarian assistance for survival. It was expected to affect a further 2 million in the coming months. Drought-related migration was already under way in some provinces; if the situation grew worse, more than a million people might have to leave their homes.

50. Afghanistan had received $129 million in funding for humanitarian activities, $98 million of which was for its Humanitarian Response Plan. Afghanistan was asking the international community to fund the 2018–2021 Humanitarian Response Plan in full. The Plan had

been revised to take account of the current drought and would provide 4.2 million people with emergency humanitarian and protection assistance in 2018. For the first time, the Plan would span a period of four years, in recognition of the existence of both acute and chronic humanitarian needs in the country. Chronic needs were being addressed by the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework.

51. A comprehensive approach must be taken to sustainable development that integrated the complex challenges arising from humanitarian emergencies. In particular, it was crucial to ensure that the environmental dimension of sustainable development and related issues were addressed, such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, and effective water management to prevent crises brought on by drought. Afghanistan remained committed to working with the international community in shaping a new, more effective and comprehensive approach to humanitarian intervention.

52. **Mr. Zahneisen** (Germany) said that his delegation concurred with the way forward proposed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Since 1968, when his country had first introduced a budget line for humanitarian assistance, the international humanitarian system had changed beyond recognition and Germany had become the second-largest bilateral donor of humanitarian assistance. The international community bore a great responsibility to support and strengthen the international humanitarian system, and must take collective action to protect humanitarian actors on the ground, whose work was becoming increasingly dangerous.

53. Long-standing donors would not be able to shoulder the ever-increasing humanitarian needs alone indefinitely. Germany would continue to support efforts to broaden the resource base among Member States and in the private sector. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator had paved the way in his ground-breaking speech in Ireland on how to follow up on that challenge.

54. Germany remained committed to the reforms initiated at the World Humanitarian Summit. A great deal of progress had already been made but there was no room for complacency. He was heartened to see that many of the key themes from that summit were reflected in the meetings being organized as part of the segment, including a planned meeting on anticipatory approaches in humanitarian assistance and a side event on forecast-based financing that had been held just prior to the current meeting. He was glad to see the focus on sexual violence and abuse, which was an extremely serious problem.

55. The World Humanitarian Summit had looked not only at increasing efficiency and closing the humanitarian financing gap but also at reducing needs. Although the humanitarian-development nexus was not under consideration during the segment, its importance was apparent on the ground and results must be achieved.

56. Lastly, the provision of quality, principled humanitarian assistance deserved as much time and attention as enhancing effectiveness and efficiency. The most critical challenge in that regard was shrinking humanitarian space owing to limitations to humanitarian access and attacks on humanitarian personnel. To counter that trend, it was more important than ever to demonstrate and preserve the distinctive nature of humanitarian assistance.

57. **Mr. Park** Chull-Joo (Republic of Korea) said that despite the overall achievements made by the international community in 2017, humanitarian needs remained significant, owing to crisis and disasters. Assistance should focus first and foremost on the most vulnerable, including women and girls, children and persons with disabilities. It would be impossible to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without redoubled efforts to reach the furthest behind before all else. The Republic of Korea was particularly concerned about an increased risk of gender-based violence in conflict situations. His country was prioritizing those vulnerable groups in its humanitarian policy and was fulfilling its commitment to expand support for them.

58. As humanitarian crises could no longer be separated from development or peace and security challenges, the United Nations system and its partners must collaborate and coordinate more effectively. The Steering Committee led by the Deputy Secretary-General would no doubt find ways to promote scaled-up collaboration at the country level, such as joint assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring.

59. More predictable and flexible funding mechanisms for humanitarian action were crucial, since they would enable the international community to have a greater impact on the most vulnerable groups, particularly in protracted, neglected and underfunded crises. The Republic of Korea had not only significantly increased its humanitarian support but had also increased its contribution to country-based pooled funds and unearmarked thematic humanitarian funds.

60. Improving the efficiency of the humanitarian system was the only way to make a real difference through humanitarian action, following the guidance set out in the new way of working. The Republic of Korea was particularly supportive of local capacity-building and innovative approaches, such as cash-based transfers to boost post-crisis resilience. It welcomed the draft resolution to be adopted in the coming days, in particular its increased emphasis on youth, skills training and vocational education, and the role that older persons could play in humanitarian emergencies.

61. **Mr. Kawamura** (Japan) said that the world was facing a trend of increasing humanitarian need. Conflict, economic shocks and climate change were not only causes and drivers of humanitarian crises, but multipliers as well, and political systems had failed to address those challenges. Japan had decided in February 2018 to allocate over $600 million to humanitarian aid and anti-terrorism and stabilization efforts in places such as the Middle East, Bangladesh and Myanmar. In April 2018, his Government had provided millions of dollars in support of United Nations humanitarian actions in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Japan had also offered technical assistance and created small grass-roots projects in cooperation with NGOs. It hoped that the combination of various funding mechanisms would effectively reduce humanitarian vulnerability.

62. However, those sums alone were not sufficient to address increasingly complex humanitarian crises. Effective aid that focused on impacts and outcomes was required to address needs on the ground, and therefore the humanitarian-development-peace nexus initiative was the proper approach. Because the modalities of the nexus approach might be different depending on each country's context, implementation on the ground and effective sharing of good practices must take precedence over continuing a discussion of norms and concepts.

63. Innovation could render assistance more effective. Japan would leverage technology to ensure delivery of assistance within limited resources and would pay close attention to technologies such as blockchain that could help maximize efficiency in the field.

64. **Mr. Cooreman** (Belgium) said that in 2017, the world had witnessed the greatest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War, with more than 20 million people at risk of famine, and 2018 had seen a further increase in violence and insecurity. The risks faced by the most vulnerable, particularly children, were exacerbated during humanitarian crises. Guaranteeing the rights of children and ensuring respect for international law were priorities for Belgium, particularly at a time when those principles were flagrantly disregarded by parties to conflicts. Humanitarian conflicts were becoming more protracted and complex, and access to populations was more difficult.

65. Belgium had made efforts to be a modern humanitarian donor. Swiftly adapting to changes in the sector, it had expanded its budget for humanitarian aid, which had allowed it to fund activities that went beyond humanitarian needs. In line with the collective commitment to the new way of working, Belgium recommended more complementarity and more synergy between humanitarian action and development assistance in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in protracted crises, as well as to address the root causes.

66. A smarter approach to humanitarian aid was needed, involving cooperation between national Governments, local communities, NGOs and the private sector. Belgium had been proactive in that area by working with the International Committee of the Red Cross and private sector entities to launch the first humanitarian impact bond, a new funding mechanism which would be deployed over a period of five years. The proceeds would be used to build rehabilitation centres in Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria. That innovative approach represented an opportunity to modernize the existing funding model. In addition, United Nations system reform provided an opportunity to improve the world's collective response to crises. Lastly, Belgium believed that humanitarian action should not be instrumentalized as a tool to promote political interests.

67. **Mr. Hofman** (Observer for the Netherlands) said that his country welcomed the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 2417 (2018), which addressed the connection between conflict and hunger. The deliberate starvation of populations was a crime and must be prosecuted. Through humanitarian diplomacy and development cooperation, the Netherlands would support humanitarian organizations in assisting people facing crises and food insecurity. Everyone should work towards zero tolerance for practices that led to food insecurity and famine, including starvation as a method of warfare.

68. More support was needed to ameliorate mental health and psychosocial issues. His Government had decided to increase its assistance to people affected by crises and disasters through psychosocial support, as too many suffered from trauma as a result of conflict and disasters. Greater attention should be paid to how to deliver mental health and psychosocial support in places that only humanitarian organizations could access.

Mental health needs should be addressed from the early stages and responses should be scaled up through simple, innovative approaches.

69. The Netherlands would continue to encourage change and innovation. It was actively promoting data-driven decision-making and robust innovation platforms and coalitions and had supported new financing instruments. In conclusion, he said that close cooperation was vital to improving the effectiveness and accountability of the United Nations humanitarian system.

70. **Ms. Stenseth** (Norway) said that all parties to armed conflict must facilitate rapid, full, impartial and unimpeded access to people in need, and must fulfil their obligations regarding the protection of civilians. Humanitarian organizations should strengthen their operational response. Concerned by attacks on humanitarian workers, Norway called on all relevant actors to implement measures outlined by the International Committee of the Red Cross and strengthen implementation of Security Council resolution 2286 (2016). Protection against weapons that caused unacceptable harm to civilians must also remain a priority. In that connection, Norway would be hosting the review conference on the mine ban convention in 2019.

71. More must be done to protect children and youth in armed conflicts. All States should endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration. Sexual violence in conflict was another growing concern; ensuring safe and reliable access to sexual and reproductive health care services and psychosocial support from the very onset of emergencies was crucial for effective humanitarian assistance. Measures such as the Minimum Initial Service Package were effective in preventing maternal mortality. Norway regretted that the Council had not taken the opportunity to include a stronger response to maternal mortality in its 2018 draft resolution. Norway deeply regretted that earlier agreement on that important point could not be maintained.

72. Over the past five years, Norway had increased its humanitarian budget by over 50 per cent. The country remained committed to predictable and flexible humanitarian funding and was one of the largest donors to the United Nations Central Emergency Fund. It also supported country-based pooled funds and encouraged innovative and efficient cash-based approaches to humanitarian action. Norway would work to use humanitarian and development funding to support education, health systems, jobs and social protection in fragile situations and protracted conflicts, and to build resilience against future shocks. For refugees and their hosts, it was critically important to achieve fairer responsibility-sharing through the forthcoming global platform and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.

73. Norway, believed that cooperation between the humanitarian sector and development agencies would deliver more durable solutions. It would soon be publishing its updated national humanitarian strategy.

74. **Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador) said that his country appreciated the role played by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and was firmly committed to applying the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Like the entire Central American region, El Salvador had repeatedly been affected by extreme hydro-meteorological events associated with climate change and El Niño that had triggered humanitarian emergencies, food insecurity and climate-related displacement. The Economic and Social Council should retain its focus on such themes and recognize the increasing impact of small-scale and gradual disasters which, although not gaining broad international attention, wrought extensive and irreversible damage on the economic, social and environment structures of Central American countries.

75. International humanitarian assistance depended on respect for international humanitarian law, which in recent years had been ignored and flouted in many places affected by humanitarian crises caused by armed conflicts. In that vein, El Salvador supported the initiative co-facilitated by Switzerland and the International Committee of the Red Cross to establish a mechanism that safeguarded the principles of international humanitarian law. It would also be useful for funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations to internalize the lessons learned at the World Humanitarian Summit, especially with regard to the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing and the empowerment of local actors as veritable partners of humanitarian initiatives.

76. The grave situation facing migrants, particularly children and adolescents, as a result of actions taken by the authorities of destination countries on migration routes was of the utmost concern. The separation of children and adolescents from their parents and their subjection to harsh conditions had negative social effects, particularly on their psychosocial development and the unity of the family. He urged authorities to discontinue such practices and make the best interests of the child their primary consideration, regardless of the migration status of parents. Separation of children and adolescents violated their human rights and aggravated

their vulnerability, with humanitarian consequences that were recognized in General Assembly resolution 69/187.

77. **Mr. Seleka** (South Africa) said that his country had increased its humanitarian assistance efforts and had worked with other countries to save lives and alleviate suffering. It had made a significant humanitarian contribution to Somalia, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Madagascar and Caribbean countries affected by hurricanes. It had also increased its contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund.

78. The humanitarian assistance policy framework developed by the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation testified to the seriousness of the country's commitment to humanitarian diplomacy in its foreign policy. Based on the philosophy of humanity towards others (Ubuntu) and the principle of pan-African solidarity, the framework contributed to a more focused and streamlined approach to humanitarian aid support and had allowed South Africa to respond to crises with more agility and effectiveness.

79. South Africa hoped that other countries from the global South, including Africa, would also step forward. In that context, it welcomed the dialogue on humanitarian diplomacy led by the Government of Kenya and hoped that it would lead to a strong position on humanitarian assistance. South Africa was willing to help other countries by sharing information and best practices. As the incoming Chair of the association of Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (referred to as BRICS), South Africa would encourage humanitarian engagement and cooperation by those countries.

80. South Africa aligned itself with the Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness and supported the initiatives of the African Union Commission to translate the decisions of its member States into concrete action. To that end, South Africa encouraged the African Union to finalize the 10-year plan for implementation of the Common African Position. Throughout its history, South Africa had often hosted asylum seekers and refugees despite economic and other challenges and remained committed to leaving no one behind.

81. **Mr. García Paz y Miño** (Ecuador) said that the frequency, intensity and duration of conflicts had resulted in an unprecedented number of people deserving the urgent attention of the international community. In 2017 — the year marking the fortieth anniversary of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement — humanitarian emergencies fuelled by conflicts and natural disasters had led to yet another increase in humanitarian needs, with 135.7 million people requiring humanitarian assistance and humanitarian funding needs surpassing $23.5 billion.

82. In the New Urban Agenda, adopted in Quito, Member States committed to strengthening the coordination role of national and local governments and their collaboration with other public entities and non-governmental organizations in the provision of social and basic services for all, including to communities that were most vulnerable to disasters and those affected by recurrent and protracted humanitarian crises; developing local, durable and dignified solutions while ensuring that aid also flowed to affected persons and host communities to prevent regression of their development; and promoting more effective emergency preparation and response systems for crisis-affected persons in urban settings. Ecuador reaffirmed its commitment to promoting more effective preparedness and emergency response in urban areas in line with the New Urban Agenda, whose implementation would contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

83. Ecuador had been struck by an earthquake in 2016, affecting 241,000 people and resulting in 671 deaths in the provinces of Manabí y Esmeraldas. A network of national and international actors had provided assistance and ensured compliance with the humanitarian mandate to fully attend to people's needs. The country's most serious emergency in decades had, however, overstretched national capacities, thereby demonstrating the need for Ecuador to step up its preparation, prevention and recovery efforts.

84. **Ms. Rodríguez Camejo** (Observer for Cuba) said that Cuba fully supported the guiding principles on humanitarian assistance established in General Assembly resolution 46/182. Nevertheless, various United Nations bodies had repeatedly warned that countries most in need would not be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals within the time frames established, and aspects of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development that were critical for countries most in need had largely been ignored. Moreover, without genuine political will, reform of the United Nations system to complement humanitarian activities would be in vain. Tangible progress would also be elusive if Member States did not tackle the root causes of underdevelopment, poverty, the unjust and unsustainable international economic order and unequal wealth distribution.

85. Cuba had made considerable progress in the development of early warning, emergency management and recovery systems. In his report, the Secretary-General acknowledged that the country was well prepared for emergencies (A/73/78–E/2018/54, para. 35). During the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean region, its preparedness system had saved the lives of some 2 million people.

86. Thousands of Cubans had also participated in humanitarian actions to help countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia in the wake of natural disasters or epidemics. A major challenge of providing international assistance in emergency situations was to refrain from using them to justify violations of the inalienable principles of international law. That included States which fuelled conflicts within other sovereign States for political ends or with the aim of appropriating or controlling natural resources or triggering wars of aggression.

87. Any initiative to strengthen the United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies must be based on the explicit recognition of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention in the internal affairs other States. Otherwise, small countries or those with limited resources could be subjected to the whims of rich and powerful nations. Member States should improve the capacity of developing countries to tackle humanitarian emergencies by strengthening international cooperation and facilitating the transfer of technologies and knowledge. Provision of such assistance, however, should be neither conditional nor detrimental to existing development programmes and resources.

88. In conclusion, she said that Cuba wished to reiterate its support for international activities to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to respond to humanitarian emergencies on the basis of respect for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

89. **Mr. Wiberg** (Observer for Sweden) said that humanitarian needs had doubled in the past five years. Despite progress in bridging the humanitarian-development divide, global efforts to support local humanitarian action, and more targeted financing, important parts of the agenda adopted at the World Humanitarian Summit had not been implemented. Humanitarian crises required political solutions; more political leadership was therefore needed to resolve the conflicts that lay behind humanitarian emergencies and prevent future crises. Serious violations of international humanitarian law, including denial of humanitarian access, led to unacceptable human suffering in armed conflicts.

90. For decades, Sweden had been among the top six humanitarian donors and had taken an active role in promoting respect for international humanitarian law and a principled, effective and efficient humanitarian response system. As penholder with Kuwait for Security Council resolutions on the humanitarian situation in Syria, Sweden had articulated the urgent need for increased humanitarian access and protection of civilians.

91. The current humanitarian financing system would benefit from more flexible funding, which allowed for a need-based approach in both protracted and sudden onset crises. Funds should be disbursed as soon as a crisis occurred to allow humanitarian organizations to begin life-saving operations immediately. Sweden had made substantial contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund and had recently signed an agreement to contribute SEK 2.7 billion over a period of four years. Sweden had also made efforts to incentivize donors to reduce earmarked funding and provide multi-year support.

92. Although the adoption of draft resolutions by consensus required concessions from all sides, the desire to reach consensus should not override previous agreements or the need to reflect reality. In that connection, his delegation felt compelled to express concern over the regression in Council discussions of sexual and reproductive health as well as treatment of that issue in the humanitarian draft resolution soon to be considered by the Council. In 2017, over 60 per cent of maternal deaths and 45 per cent of infant deaths worldwide had occurred in countries affected by humanitarian crises. Therefore, ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights was a life-saving measure. Initiatives such as the Minimum Initial Service Package had an immediate impact on preventing maternal morality and were an essential part of humanitarian work.

93. **Mr. Scott** (Observer for Australia) said that while donor funding was currently at a record high, more than 135 million people still required assistance. The international community had fallen short in responding to that humanitarian need. The humanitarian ecosystem needed reform in order to deliver on its objectives of providing humanitarian assistance and protection that was fit for purpose and yielded the best outcomes possible for those affected by crises. To that end, Australia saw three main areas for improvement.

94. Firstly, Australia was committed to empowering local actors in disaster preparedness and response, with a focus on the Pacific region. It had helped to build capacity in natural disaster management offices and had

partnered with civil society and women's organizations. Its partnership with the organization called BRAC in Bangladesh demonstrated the value of local leadership in developing efficient context-relevant humanitarian assistance, as BRAC had been able to quickly expand its operations and leverage existing relationships to become the largest responder to the humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh.

95. Secondly, given that sexual and gender-based violence was exacerbated by crises, the protection, inclusion and empowerment of women and girls were critical to humanitarian action. Australia prioritized sexual and reproductive health services in its humanitarian responses and would support the updated Minimum Initial Service Package. Australia also prioritized inclusion of persons with disabilities in its programming through accurate data collection. Australia increasingly included lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in its humanitarian actions, given their specific vulnerabilities during crises.

96. Thirdly, targeted funding lay at the core of an effective, efficient and fit-for-purpose humanitarian system. Multi-year partnerships provided the predictability needed for humanitarian planning. Unearmarked funding made up 30 per cent of the total humanitarian funding provided by Australia, which allowed partners to respond quickly. Australia called for collective and direct strategic response plans prioritized by need, in order to attract new donors and private sector partners.

97. **Ms. Krisnamurthi** (Observer for Indonesia) said that her delegation was concerned that humanitarian emergencies were increasingly caused by the spread of radicalism, extremism and terrorism. Indonesia condemned the persistent violation of international humanitarian law and attacks on civilians, medical and humanitarian personnel and infrastructure. Given the magnitude and complexity of current humanitarian emergencies, durable solutions were required.

98. The guidelines contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182 on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance should form the basis for all responses to requests for humanitarian assistance. The principles of neutrality, impartiality, and the protection of human dignity should guide the humanitarian assistance of the United Nations and other actors. Aid should be provided based on the request of the host Government, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned. To reduce need, risk and vulnerability, root causes of humanitarian crises must be addressed.

99. Inclusive and participatory processes were imperative in humanitarian response. The Council should therefore serve as a forum for exploring the possibility of harmonizing United Nations humanitarian assistance with efforts made by regional and national entities. Furthermore, innovative financing mechanisms should be developed in order to supplement overstretched United Nations resources. Collaboration with the private sector and NGOs, for example, might help to close the funding gap. The United Nations should be commended for developing better coordination and accountability mechanisms. Given that humanitarian crises were increasingly linked to security issues, greater coherence between the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations organs, such as the Security Council, might be necessary.

100. Indonesia had introduced laws to address natural disasters and conflict management that underscored the responsibility of the Government to manage humanitarian emergencies and internally displaced persons. In 2010, the President had issued a decree on assistance to refugees and asylum seekers, and Indonesia had collaborated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to process settlement of displaced persons.

101. **Ms. Hoang** (Viet Nam) said that her country faced significant challenges due to climate change and extreme weather events, and her Government therefore believed that reducing humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability should be placed at the top of global commitments and national policies. In 2017, typhoons, droughts and floods in Viet Nam had taken the lives of 389 people and seriously affected the livelihoods of millions of others. Viet Nam had developed policies on risk reduction and response to climate change, and, to ensure that they were implemented effectively, it had established a nation-wide network on risk reduction and disaster relief. In addition, half of the country's provinces had developed their own local action plans. Global commitments and national risk reduction policies needed adequate resources in order to succeed. It was also important to foster local resilience through education and public awareness-raising programmes so that people had the knowledge and skills necessary to respond appropriately to threats.

102. Women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities deserved special attention, as they were the most vulnerable groups during disasters or extreme weather events. Successful projects that had focused on women's participation in responses to climate change in coastal provinces had shown that such groups could be encouraged to contribute significantly to risk reduction policies. With that principle in mind, her delegation had

sponsored several initiatives on vulnerable groups at United Nations forums, including a draft resolution at the thirty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council. In conclusion, she said that a strengthened cooperation mechanism between the United Nations and regional organizations working to reduce humanitarian risk and vulnerability would be vital.

103. **Ms. Flores Flake** (Observer for Honduras) said that climate change was one of the most complex challenges of the twenty-first century since its causes and consequences were global and its impact on regions was asymmetrical, while those who contributed to it least were often the most affected by it. The burden fell most heavily on developing countries, where it threatened to aggravate vulnerabilities, erode progress and severely damage prospects for development, even as those economies were already struggling to overcome poverty and boost economic growth.

104. Central America had in the past suffered from cyclical droughts in the "dry corridor". Over the previous five years, El Niño had triggered drought emergencies in Honduras that had imperilled food security and food production and significantly reduced production of coffee and sorghum — two crops on which the national economy was heavily dependent. Without means for mitigation and adaptation, natural resources and the quality of life in the country would be critically affected. The economy, gross domestic product and any progress made towards the Sustainable Development Goals would also suffer.

105. As a matter of survival, Honduras had established a robust legal framework to address such matters, including legislation on the environment, water, forestry, protected regions and woodlands. The National Council had also approved a law on the establishment of a national directorate for climate change and specific departments responsible for monitoring implementation of the framework. Although the Government recognized the importance of securing sufficient funds to tackle climate change, the status of Honduras as a middle-income country made it increasingly difficult to access additional resources to that end. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that resources were often closely linked to priorities established in respect of official development assistance.

106. Climate change could not be tackled unless countries agreed to cooperate on a global scale. The challenge of adapting to new conditions, implementing mitigation measures, while at the same time recognizing shared but differentiated responsibilities and varying capacities, would determine the character of sustainable development in the twenty-first century.

107. **Mr. Flynn** (Ireland) said that although the gap between humanitarian needs and funding continued to grow, the humanitarian system had improved. In 2017, the Secretary-General's call to action to prevent famines in South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen had resulted in significant mobilization by the international community, demonstrating the capacity of the humanitarian system to respond to early warnings and scale up appropriately. Similarly, while the current outbreak of the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was not over, the apparent stabilization in the number of cases thanks to the rapid response by the World Health Organization and others showed that the international community was learning from experience and responding faster and more effectively to crises.

108. That increase in effectiveness was the result of intensive efforts by organizations and States to put in place better emergency response systems and frameworks. As conflicts became more protracted, not only the immediate but also the longer-term needs of those receiving assistance would have to be considered. It would be crucial to move beyond the rhetoric of the humanitarian-development nexus and the new way of working to joined-up planning, shared analysis and coherent programming on the ground. Since progress had thus far been uneven, more guidance should be provided to those in the field, drawing on evidence of what did and did not work.

109. While operationalization of the nexus must be context-specific if the principles fundamental to humanitarian work were to be protected, clearer frameworks were needed in order to allow humanitarian and development actors to collaborate at the country level in the knowledge that the humanitarian space was protected. As incoming chair of the Donor Support Group of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ireland would support efforts to strengthen collaboration among humanitarian and development actors, particularly in protracted crises, while maintaining its distinct role of coordinating principled humanitarian action. Ireland also supported United Nations action to prevent sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse through a zero-tolerance approach.

110. The cases of the famines in South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen had shown how critical it was to take anticipatory measures and act early to reduce suffering. Ireland would continue to support not only the Central Emergency Response Fund, which was a crucial tool for enabling the funding of rapid, effective and coordinated humanitarian responses, but also country-based pooled funds, since both played a vital role in funding those local and national actors best placed to react to and

prioritize emerging humanitarian needs. The provision of pooled, core and flexible funding also ensured that humanitarian organizations worked in line with humanitarian principles to reduce human suffering wherever needs were greatest. Ireland was concerned, however, that the target under the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing, namely, 30 per cent of unearmarked or softly earmarked funding, would not be reached and therefore urged other signatories to increase their unearmarked funding.

111. It was important to focus not only on global humanitarian responses but also on the root causes of suffering. The erosion of respect for international humanitarian law and the withholding of access for humanitarian aid was contributing to a global protection crisis for civilian populations. Member States must work to honour the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit to uphold norms governing the conduct of hostilities and strengthen mechanisms for accountability and compliance with international law.

112. **Ms. Yalçın** (Turkey) said that the international community currently faced a number of humanitarian emergencies that severely affected the lives of the 65 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide and posed a self-perpetuating risk to collective security. Although humanitarian assistance could alleviate the suffering of victims, the root causes would be eliminated only through a sustainable and holistic approach. The Secretary-General had presented the tools needed for a paradigm shift in his Agenda for Humanity (A/70/709), and the World Humanitarian Summit had built on that momentum. To live up to the Summit's core commitment to leave no one behind, the international community should focus on three main objectives.

113. First, it should adopt an innovative approach to international cooperation in situations of forced displacement and a model that ensured predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing. The proximity of a country to a crisis should not determine its responsibility for dealing with the consequences. The conflict in Syria, for example, had led to the largest refugee crisis of modern times, with colossal human, economic and social costs. Turkey consequently hosted the largest number of refugees in the world and had been compelled to mobilize considerable resources for their well-being.

114. Second, Member States should strive to improve gender equality and inclusivity, as well as to eliminate gaps in the education of children, adolescents and young people. Measures to improve gender equality, which accounted for nearly 20 per cent of commitments during the Summit, would not only strengthen societies and economies, but also enhance the quality of life of communities and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Education was also an important aspect of national and global policies in the context of humanitarian crises. Turkey had enrolled many of the 1 million Syrian children which it hosted in public schools and temporary education centres; had provided them with cash assistance; had run programmes to integrate them into Turkish society; and had trained Syrian volunteers and Turkish teachers. The implementation of the Education Cannot Wait fund, launched during the Summit to provide education in emergencies, would be key to the delivery of high-quality education by 2030 to all children affected by protracted crises.

115. Third, Member States should address the vulnerabilities of migrants and provide them with regular and lawful opportunities. Turkey was committed to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and to reinforcing its existing response capacities and building new effective partnerships. As a country at the crossroads of migratory flows, it had high hopes for both the global compact on refugees and the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. The two compacts should be finalized as soon as possible, as they would result in better coordination of policies, alleviate the burden of host countries and ameliorate the living conditions of millions of migrants and refugees. Any policy that did not have a humanitarian essence would not yield lasting solutions.

116. **Mr. Rai** (Observer for Papua New Guinea) said that his country was still reeling from the biggest natural disaster it had ever faced, an earthquake of 7.5 magnitude that had struck five provinces on 26 February 2018. Over 160 people had lost their lives; 270,000 people — some 125,000 of whom were children — had required immediate humanitarian assistance; and 147,000 people had become food insecure due to extensive landslides that had destroyed food gardens and key infrastructure. Food, water, shelter and health remained high priorities. An estimated $62 million was needed for urgent life-saving assistance and for restoring basic services. Papua New Guinea highly appreciated funds and contributions in kind provided thus far by bilateral and multilateral partners, including United Nations bodies, the European Union, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, various Member States, the private sector, faith-based organizations and civil society.

117. The recent natural disaster had shown that partnership, preparedness, and capacity- and resilience-building, as well as strong and committed political leadership, were fundamental pillars for mitigating the

consequences of disasters and designing adequate adaptive measures. The country's newly established National Disaster Management Team had drawn up the Highlands Earthquake Disaster Management Team Response Plan to cover response, recovery and reconstruction in the wake of future natural disasters. Papua New Guinea was open and committed to any partnerships in that regard which ensured inclusive engagement of affected communities.

118. The humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council was a useful platform for collectively taking stock of and addressing complex human-made and natural humanitarian issues that transcended national boundaries. The findings in the *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2018* that humanitarian concerns were becoming more frequent and intense highlighted the relevance of the theme chosen for the current segment. His delegation urged all Member States to adopt the Council's draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations", as it would provide an indispensable platform for emergency humanitarian assistance.

119. **Mr. Muhammad Bande** (Nigeria) said that the humanitarian affairs segment was relevant in the ongoing efforts to de-escalate the upsurge in the number of intra-State conflicts since the turn of the millennium. Given that, in that time, almost every part of the world had faced humanitarian challenges that had impaired economic growth, social harmony or political stability, solutions must be found to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In Nigeria, the insidious actions of Boko Haram insurgents had placed heavy responsibilities on the Government for the management, resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees, especially as the focus of global humanitarian response mechanisms had in recent years been diverted from the issues of internally displaced persons.

120. Nigeria had recently launched its second national action plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which set out an overarching framework and five strategic pillars for women peace and security concerns in conflict, non-conflict and post-conflict situations. The national action plan had been complemented by zonal action plans highlighting regionally specific issues. In addition, each state was developing its own action plan and, in some cases, local government action plans based on area-specific peace and security concerns. That had become the national model for addressing emerging issues related to women, peace and security, such as insurgency, terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization. A national technical advisory committee had been formed to oversee the implementation of the national action plan and create an enabling environment for pursuing the gender dimensions of peace priorities.

121. The Boko Haram insurgency had resulted in a massive humanitarian crisis affecting over 1.5 million women and girls, mostly in rural communities. In response, his Government had taken decisive steps to ameliorate the plight of women and girls and others affected by the crisis, including through a robust social protection initiative and strategies to improve security in north-east Nigeria and to accelerate recovery and reintegration from a gender perspective. The national action plan had also contributed to the implementation of the Buhari Plan, which focused on the economic and social needs of women and girls in affected communities in north-east Nigeria.

122. Operation Safe Corridor, a multinational and multi-agency initiative, was designed to ensure the deradicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration of surrendered and existing Boko Haram members into Nigerian society. Many insurgents had voluntarily surrendered through the programme, while some 700 others had indicated their interest in surrendering.

123. As part of its commitment to reconstructing north-east Nigeria, the Government had entered into partnerships with humanitarian institutions and civil society organizations that had provided humanitarian relief and financial, economic, educational and psychosocial support for victims and displaced persons. A comprehensive psychosocial therapy programme was also being run for 108 of the released schoolgirls who had been kidnapped in the Chibok region. In addition, Nigeria was partnering with a number of development agencies working in the field.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Matjila (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)
(A/73/78–E/2018/54)

1. **The President** said that the number of children living in conflict zones had been steadily increasing since 2000. They faced grave risks, including a lack of proper nutrition, medical care, safe water and sanitation; an increased risk of violence, exploitation and abuse; disrupted education; and protracted displacement. The objective of the high-level panel discussion about to begin was to reflect on the vulnerabilities and risks that children faced in armed conflict and to explore good practices in protecting children and meeting their specific needs, including through ensuring respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. He hoped that participants would come away with practical steps that could be implemented. The protection of children in armed conflict must be a priority; indeed, his own country, South Africa, firmly believed that, by working together, the international community could make a difference for those children.

2. *A video presentation based on real-life drawings by children affected by armed conflict was shown.*

3. **The President** said that the drawings in the video, which demonstrated how children reflected on their daily experiences in conflict situations, caused viewers to contemplate the dangers to which children were exposed. The international community must reflect deeply on what should be done to save those children and prepare them for the future. He hoped that the African saying "any child is my child" could help guide that reflection.

High-level panel discussion: "Addressing the impact of armed conflict on children — strengthening the response to meet children's needs"

4. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that children continued to be disproportionately affected by armed conflict. According to a new report from Save the Children International, the number of children living in conflict zones had increased by more than 75 per cent since the early 1990s, to over 350 million in 2016, representing one in six of the world's children. They were robbed of their childhoods in many ways, including by being forced into armed groups or subjected to sexual exploitation and abuse.

5. While the meeting could be spent listing the scale of atrocities and abuses, it also provided an opportunity to discuss what could be done to tackle those problems, as there were reasons to be hopeful. He therefore asked the panellists to share some of the activities undertaken by their organizations to make a difference for children and asked the first panellist, Ms. Malek, to share her experience as a refugee, including the difficulties she had faced and what had enabled her to overcome them.

6. **Ms. Malek** (South Sudanese refugee and founder of Stand for Education), panellist, said that she had been born into a large, middle-class family in the 1980s during the second civil war in Sudan, in what was now officially known as the Republic of South Sudan. She had felt that she had a good life, as most children did, especially when they had their parents, foundation, home and the basic necessities. When the war had broken out, people had suddenly been told to leave their homes and their families. Young children had been forced to leave everything they had known because they were in danger and their country no longer accepted them.

7. Her family had been displaced. Her father, who had been working in the Government at the time, had wanted to stay. Her mother, on the other hand, had focused on saving her daughters so that they could have a better chance at life and education. As a result, her mother had made the difficult decision to escape with her daughters. From Khartoum, her family had escaped to Egypt. Her mother had sold all her possessions so that they could be smuggled on a ship, where they had spent approximately two weeks hiding in a compartment. Her father had had no idea.

8. In Egypt, despite having been educated as a nurse, her mother had had to start from scratch to ensure that her children could go to school. As a result, at nine years old, she had taken care of her younger sisters while her mother worked, taking them to school every morning, feeding them and making sure that they would be able to survive another day. There had not been refugee camps, but her family had stayed in a refugee area, in which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Rescue Committee had provided support for migrations and transitions. Having applied for asylum, her family had been granted refugee status in the United States of America through the lottery system four and a half years after their arrival in Egypt. While they had restarted their lives in Newark, New Jersey, they had continued to face discrimination. In Egypt, people had told them

to go back to their country. In the United States, people had sometimes not understood them and had not known about the refugee crisis or even the existence of their country. While she had felt that her situation was horrid, her cousins' situation had been worse. They had walked for three or four months to escape Sudan through Kenya. Along the way, they had seen dead bodies, kidnappings, women being raped and women and children being trafficked. Her mother had located those same cousins in the United States, and her family's case had been moved to California, where they had re-established their lives yet again. At that time, she had been discovered as a model.

9. She had learned very quickly that she was privileged and very fortunate to have the opportunities she had been given, even though she had not recognized it at the time. The people who worked behind the scenes, who understood the refugee or migration issue, had given her family a chance. Their work had allowed her to attend the current meeting. As an actor, model and disc jockey, she had had an even bigger platform on which to make a difference. As soon as she had entered the entertainment industry, she had known that she needed to speak on behalf of the voiceless and for all the people she had left behind. She also spoke on behalf of her mother, who had sacrificed her life since age 14 to take care of her family. For that reason, she had decided to use her platform and not allow her platform to use her. She shared her story, of which she had been ashamed because she did not want to be seen as a victim or treated with pity. She was simply a human being, like everyone else. She had lived through a circumstance that was beyond her control, but she had survived, and she was making the best of it. She called on participants to use their voices and platforms to bring awareness to the humanitarian crisis.

10. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked the second panellist about the specific vulnerabilities that children in armed conflict faced and how those problems were compounded.

11. **Ms. Fore** (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), panellist, said that 535 million children were affected by armed conflict, 10 million were refugees and 17 million were internally displaced. Community needs were growing in States such as Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Children faced significant human rights vulnerabilities, forced displacement and separation from their families. They also faced threats to their personal safety, including abduction, trafficking, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation and the use of explosive weapons by armed forces and groups. Children became front-line targets; they were used as human shields and killed or maimed by the deliberate targeting of hospitals and schools. The compounded consequences of those vulnerabilities set in motion a downward spiral that disrupted lives and devastated futures. Conflicts destroyed basic services, including health care, water and education. Family incomes suffered, making it more difficult for parents to provide proper nutrition to their children, and collapsing health services increased the spread of preventable diseases. Furthermore, the lack of humanitarian access made it difficult to provide services.

12. In the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 200 health centres and 400 schools had been attacked, and violence had driven 850,000 children from their homes. As a result, children were vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation; they were unable to attend school; and over 350,000 were currently suffering from severe acute malnutrition. In Yemen, 1.8 million children were acutely malnourished, 2 million were out of school and approximately 250,000 under 5 years of age were suffering from suspected cholera and acute watery diarrhoea.

13. A generation of children was at risk. The international community must not allow that humanitarian crisis to continue. UNICEF therefore renewed its call for an end to conflict and for zero tolerance against the targeting of children. All parties to conflict must abide by their obligations under international law and their legal and moral commitments to protect children at all times, which included ending their detention and criminalization. UNICEF also called for zero tolerance of attacks against humanitarian personnel. It was increasingly difficult to access children in countries in which their needs were greatest. In Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, UNICEF and its partners were ready to deliver vital humanitarian support. Their abiding interest was in serving children, but they could only do so if all parties to conflict and their allies granted them full and unconditional access.

14. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), introducing the third panellist, said that it would be interesting to hear more about the medium- and long-term impacts of conflicts on children from the perspective of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

15. **Mr. Mardini** (Director for the Near and Middle East, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)), panellist, said that over half of all refugees were children and, in 2016 alone, over 8,000 children

had been killed or maimed in conflict situations. While there were legal obligations and frameworks in place to protect civilians, particularly children, there was still a significant gap between the law and its practice and between the pledges made and the realities on the ground. Those working for ICRC witnessed daily the devastation that was caused when laws were not respected. For example, violence against health-care facilities and personnel resulted in children suffering from diseases, psychosocial trauma and long-term injuries and disabilities. The long-term effects of attacks on health care were particularly devastating for children, as those living in countries affected by conflict were twice as likely to die before age 5.

16. Education was among the least resilient public services during conflict. Access to school was often constrained by insecurity, military operations and numerous violations of international humanitarian law. Students and teachers were attacked or threatened. They were frequently casualties of conflicts as a result of urban warfare in densely populated areas and the excessive use of force by armed forces and groups. In addition, schools were targeted, incidentally damaged or used for military purposes, including for weapons and ammunition storage. While schools were civilian objects under international humanitarian law, when used by armed forces and groups, they lost their protection and became military targets. In addition, schools were sometimes used to host internally displaced persons, which also disrupted education. Those issues had severe consequences for children's futures as well as their country's long-term social and economic outlook.

17. Children who were recruited by armed forces or groups were particularly vulnerable. They were often imprisoned, wounded or killed. They were made victims of, witnesses to and sometimes participants in atrocities, including rape and other forms of sexual violence. When families fled, leaving everything behind, children were exposed to family separation. Limited access to food, water and shelter also affected children disproportionately and resulted in malnutrition, serious health problems or death, as was the case in Yemen and parts of the Syrian Arab Republic and had been the case in Iraq. Displaced girls and boys were particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation, and boys were at risk of being arbitrarily detained, where they were subjected to poor conditions and ill-treatment.

18. Children affected by violence needed psychosocial support to meet their specific needs related to the trauma of displacement or forced recruitment, as experiencing violence could have a direct impact on the development of children's brains and bodies. For example, the children who had lived under the rule of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and other groups had witnessed atrocities to which no child should be exposed. It was therefore critical to invest in psychosocial programmes. Since 2010, ICRC had increased the number of its programmes from 5 to 107, benefiting children in several categories, including those wounded by weapons, amputees, survivors of sexual violence and families of the missing.

19. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), enquired about ICRC efforts to solve the problem of family separation in the Near and Middle East.

20. **Mr. Mardini** (Director for the Near and Middle East, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that ICRC was very active in re-establishing family links, working on the ground with national partners, primarily national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. Although the issue of foreign fighters was controversial within the international community, it was also important to re-establish their family links. For example, foreign fighters had brought 1,800 family members to Iraq, two thirds of whom were minors under age 12. The need to re-establish family links, which had become an ongoing task for ICRC, continued to grow as more people were displaced or separated. For example, in the Syrian Arab Republic, 700,000 internally displaced persons had been able to return to their neighbourhoods in 2017, but over 2 million had been newly displaced.

21. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), introducing the fourth panellist asked about the challenge of meeting children's educational needs during conflicts.

22. **Ms. Sherif** (Director, Education Cannot Wait), panellist, said that Education Cannot Wait was a global fund for education created by the World Humanitarian Summit and hosted by UNICEF. It catered to 75 million children and young persons who were impacted by armed conflicts and natural disasters.

23. Five major challenges in conflict situations were particularly relevant to education. First, due to the current duration of armed conflicts, the average humanitarian crisis lasted seven years. In the case of Afghanistan, the conflict had lasted 40 years. Given that the school cycle for children should be 12 years, multiple generations of children lost their right to continuous, quality education in long-term conflicts. Furthermore, displacement lasted on average between 10 and 17 years, which meant that children were displaced in camps or in host communities for all or most of the 12-year school cycle, often without access

to national education systems, or having education disrupted altogether.

24. Second, every armed conflict, without exception, was a protection crisis marked by violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including refugee law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Impunity had intensified and prevailed, despite the many efforts in recent decades to establish an international law enforcement system, whether through international tribunals, dialogue and engagement within the United Nations or training and awareness-raising.

25. Third, too many children were being left behind. Only 39 per cent of refugee children attended primary school. Girls were among the furthest left behind, and girls in armed conflict were 90 per cent less likely to receive a quality education. Children with physical or mental disabilities were also left behind.

26. Fourth, an extremely low percentage of international development and humanitarian funding was allocated to education. Those 12 years of education represented an investment in the human mind and the future of a generation. It was also an investment in the empowerment of girls to provide alternatives to early marriage. Currently, a girl in South Sudan was more likely to die in childbirth than to finish primary school. Despite the dramatic statistics, only 3 to 4 per cent of humanitarian funding was allocated to education in emergencies. She wondered whether that was a reflection on how little value was placed on investment in the human mind, gender equality and the empowerment of a new generation, as education was fundamental to achieving peaceful conflict resolution, building economically viable States, exercising good governance and supporting democracy and the rule of law.

27. Fifth, there was a significant divide between humanitarian and development actors. While development actors understood the value of education, they were more cautious during crises and unwilling to take risks or operate with the speed required. For example, hundreds of thousands of children and young persons fleeing across the border from Myanmar to Bangladesh were in urgent need of education. Without it, they would have significant psychological scars and be overly traumatized, further disempowered and left behind. Education was one of the first interventions needed to manage and rescue human values and the human mind. On the humanitarian side, education was not usually considered life-saving. Low levels of funding in the humanitarian sector made it impossible to provide quality education, and yet it was critical to bridge the divide between development and humanitarian efforts, in line with the commitment made at the World Humanitarian Summit and the Secretary-General's recommendation in his report on the repositioning of the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

28. Education must be seen as an investment in the human being, for girls and boys alike, with particular emphasis on girls, refugees and displaced persons. It must be linked to all other Sustainable Development Goals, as good governance, the rule of law, peace and security and conflict prevention would not be possible unless the members of a society had been empowered from an early age to lead those efforts.

29. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked about the work undertaken by Stand for Education.

30. **Ms. Malek** (South Sudanese refugee and founder of Stand for Education) said that she wanted to use the limelight to share the stories of the voiceless and the helpless. In her advocacy work, she had usually been the only refugee sharing experiences. In order to help people, it was important to listen to them to identify their needs. As a result, she had started an organization to address the issues affecting refugees, as told through their voices, stories and experiences.

31. She had chosen Stand for Education because education meant life, enlightenment and opportunity. It played an important role in all other sectors, including health, the economy and agriculture, and it was a basic human right. Every child wanted to learn to count and read and colour. And yet, where she was from, children were getting married before they even knew the alphabet. They were trafficked, used for labour and recruited as soldiers. She advocated for education as a way to end poverty, discrimination, ignorance and greed. After learning of several schools in South Sudan that had been abandoned because of conflict and unnecessary wars, she had begun to partner with schools that needed help to remain in the country, rebuild and provide knowledge and education.

32. Stand for Education also helped with understanding the basic right of land ownership, because most people had ancestral land rights, which were difficult to convey in written contracts. She wanted to help address those issues in a way that respected cultures and promoted sustainability and self-sufficiency. Her organization also had a peacebuilding programme that focused on conflict resolution and providing the right type of education, tailored to the needs of the community. It worked with the Ministry of Education in South Sudan to renovate

existing schools and provide quality education. Its "Stand Up Girl" programme worked to prevent child marriage and early motherhood by providing girls with education and life skills.

33. The organization worked at the grass-roots level with anyone who was underprivileged and needed basic access to education. The Malek Primary School, which had begun with 200 children, had been funded by an organization called ImpactAVillage. The community members themselves had built the school; they had only needed the resources and the opportunity to do so. The Hope and Resurrection Secondary School had 300 students, 100 of whom were girls who lived in the compound, thanks to generous partners and funders who had built a dormitory. The boys, however, had to walk one or two hours every day to arrive at the school. When parents had wanted to withdraw their daughters to be married, the school had instituted a policy under which all children from the same family would have to be removed. As a result, families had elected to keep all of their children in the school. Women's empowerment was not just about women; men and boys must be involved and educated so that they felt included in the progress rather than resentful of it. It was not a competition; men and women had different power, and each power was supposed to balance the other.

34. In partnership with Confident Children out of Conflict, her organization worked to address the needs of orphans, child soldiers and children who had been sexually or physically abused or had suffered severe injuries from war. Through storytelling and human connections, it listened to children, youth and communities in an effort to understand those needs. When used ethically and responsibly, social media provided an opportunity to hold certain people accountable. She encouraged participants to become the change they wished to see in the world, turning problematic situations into opportunities to find solutions.

35. In celebration of World Refugee Day, she had worked with other models who were refugees, migrants or immigrants to put together a campaign that focused on being human rather than being labelled. Humanity was about making connections. There must be an end to stereotypes, racism and the stigmatization of refugees and migrants.

36. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked about the most effective and durable ways of addressing children's needs in conflict.

37. **Ms. Fore** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that education was one of the most effective and durable ways to address children's needs. Rapid response mechanisms also played an important role. For example, a number of United Nations agencies and non-profit organizations (NGOs) would arrive in difficult locations and secure an area in which they would provide nutrition and health services for a few days. Rapid response mechanisms were also effective on a larger scale. In Iraq, 1.3 million children on the move had received supplies, including water, hygiene products and ready-to-eat rations. In South Sudan, 780,000 children under 5 years of age had been provided with health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene, education and protection services.

38. In addition, programming and services in fragile contexts needed to look beyond the immediate emergency to longer-term development, with initiatives to improve disease outbreak surveillance and strengthen community schools, health centres, hospitals and water systems. In the Syrian Arab Republic, in 2017, UNICEF had supported the rehabilitation of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in 558 schools, benefiting over 380,000 students. The community had been vital to that undertaking. In Yemen, 1.3 million beneficiaries had received emergency cash assistance, which had been provided in partnership with the World Bank. Such assistance helped families meet their immediate needs, boosted the local economy and put young people on a longer-term path of recovery.

39. The international community must commit to engaging with all parties to conflict in a non-political way, which was vital to negotiating humanitarian access, building trust on all sides and securing the release of children who had been recruited to armed forces or groups. It must also continue to build new partnerships with the World Bank, as well as local governments, NGOs, civil society and businesses in order to reach children living through conflict. For example, in South Sudan, a number of young people in the camps had been learning how to operate and maintain the hand water pumps. Wristbands with tracking technology could help reunite children who were separated from their families. Such partnerships would increase the effectiveness of all organizations; efforts to promote development and humanitarian assistance also promoted peace.

40. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that it would be helpful to hear examples of good practices or success stories in making the protection of children in conflicts a reality.

41. **Mr. Mardini** (Director for the Near and Middle East, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that the work of ICRC was grounded in four important principles in order to protect children before violations occurred. First, children who had been recruited by armed groups and were accused of having committed crimes should be treated primarily as victims of violations, not perpetrators. Second, they should be detained only as a measure of last resort. Third, children displaced by conflict must be treated with special respect and protection, including ensuring access to food, health care and education, and should be reunited with their families. Lastly, ICRC urged more States to prevent the recruitment of children and ease their reintegration into society by adhering to the Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups, which complemented existing laws.

42. Given the fragmented and protracted nature of conflicts in the Middle East, there were a number of different actors. For example, hundreds of armed groups operated in Syria and Yemen, and dozens of States had been involved in the armed conflicts in Syria and Iraq. That had led to a pattern of diffusion, and sometimes denial, of responsibility for complying with obligations under international humanitarian law. ICRC had therefore engaged in a dialogue with States and armed groups in an effort to sensitize armed groups to the importance of not recruiting minors, albeit with mixed results and, building on good practices that had worked in previous conflicts, convince States that the support provided to their partners and groups should be conditional upon respect for international humanitarian law. States should also establish a vetting system to ensure that they did not recruit individuals with a record of violations. If States and groups were serious about respecting international humanitarian law, there was a range of practical measures that would reduce the problem. Such dialogue should not be politicized; it should be undertaken in a confidential, bilateral manner.

43. Furthermore, conversations with communities and minors helped to find solutions that were anchored in the reality on the ground, and ICRC often relied on local solutions to alleviate suffering. For instance, in Lebanon, it had reinforced passive security in schools and had trained students and teachers to be prepared when fighting broke out. The first time that ICRC had been able to enter a besieged area in Syria, it had been focused on providing food, water and medicine; however, the communities' highest priority had been restoring education. As a result, ICRC had included school kits in its distributions in Syria, complete with a mine risk leaflet providing guidance on yet another acute humanitarian problem.

44. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked what good examples had been seen on the ground to preserve and restore children's education in conflict. It would also be helpful to elaborate on the humanitarian-development nexus in education and how to generate solutions by working together across silos.

45. **Ms. Sherif** (Director of Education Cannot Wait) said that, as a global fund, Education Cannot Wait had five core objectives: to inspire political commitment through positive and forward-looking initiatives; to catalyse funding; to encourage collaboration and bridge the humanitarian and development divide in the education sector; to ensure the localization of services by listening to the people receiving assistance; and to improve effectiveness, results and accountability. Education Cannot Wait did not operate in-country; rather, it served as a facilitator to bring together actors around education in crisis, working in partnership with United Nations agencies, NGOs, civil society, host Governments and refugees and displaced persons themselves.

46. At the global level, education was making its way to the forefront. At the Group of Seven Summit in June 2018, leaders had pledged $2.9 billion for girls' education. The European Union Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management had also pledged to increase humanitarian spending on education to 10 per cent of humanitarian aid allocations. Since the establishment of Education Cannot Wait, there had been an upward trend of 0.2 per cent in allocations for education.

47. With regard to good practices, it was essential not to create new coordination mechanisms in armed conflicts. While bilateral agreements and multilateral coordination could be undertaken in a typical development context, the international community must work through humanitarian coordination structures in armed conflicts. Education Cannot Wait worked with humanitarian coordinators and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee cluster system to strengthen the education cluster. Rather than stepping out of that system to work with development actors, her organization and its partners invited development actors to be part of the humanitarian coordination system around education. On the ground, they ensured that development actors were invited to coordination meetings about planned investments in the education sector. As a result of that new model, development and humanitarian actors were coming together to plan for education in the midst of crisis. For example, her organization and its partners had travelled to Uganda in

2017 to assist the 1.3 million South Sudanese refugees, half of whom had been school-aged children and young persons. Development actors had already been working with the Government of Uganda to invest in Ugandan children. Education Cannot Wait, which had been asked to develop a joint programme, had brought together the humanitarian and development communities under the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. As a result of that collective effort, the first-ever joint humanitarian-development programme would be launched in July 2018 to address the Ugandan refugee crisis. The roles were clearly defined: humanitarian actors would deliver immediate services and, in parallel, development actors would begin to establish the national education plan, curriculum and language programmes. Similar joint programmes were being launched in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Somalia under the humanitarian coordination system. The humanitarian-development nexus was about partnerships, pairing humanitarian speed with development depth.

48. It was also important to hear from the refugees themselves. For example, during the consultations in Uganda, the various organizations had been focusing on continuity and quality of education. However, the refugees had pointed out that if school fees had not been included in the joint programme, they would have been unable to benefit from that education, as they could not afford it. The ability to access services was essential. In Afghanistan, her organization had worked with its partners to ensure that 75 per cent of recruited teachers were women, with a view to opening access for girls and making parents more comfortable with sending their girls to school.

49. In 2017, the United Nations agencies and NGOs working on the ground in Bangladesh, led by the inter-agency coordination group that was headed by UNICEF and Save the Children, had contacted Education Cannot Wait to request funding to immediately implement their consolidated, coordinated proposal for education. Education Cannot Wait had been able to move quickly because it was a fund designed to operate with less bureaucracy and more accountability. In their commitment to the Rohingya children, the agencies had worked together, rather than in competition, to organize a coordinated response in which it was very clear what actions needed to be taken. In February 2018, just six months later, learning centres had been established and psychosocial services had been provided. As a result, hope had been restored to the children. Those results were possible when everyone worked together.

50. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked how to effectively involve members of the public who were unfamiliar with the impact of armed conflicts on children around the world.

51. **Ms. Bassols Delgado** (Spain) said that the impact of armed conflicts on children was an area in which a number of issues converged, including peace and security, human rights and humanitarian and development action. Greater effort must be made to integrate those elements. She asked how to resolve the dichotomy between investing in much-needed public infrastructure systems, such as education, water, sanitation and health, and having to do so through the authorities that controlled those public infrastructures and impeded humanitarian access. She also wondered how the humanitarian response could address the varying levels of fragility in middle-income countries immersed in conflict.

52. **Mr. Moura** (Observer for Portugal) said that, several years earlier, his Government had established a programme to provide emergency scholarships to Syrian students in tertiary education. That rapid response mechanism was currently being expanded to include students from other countries in conflict so that they could continue their studies and contribute to the recovery of their countries in the future.

53. **Mr. Seleka** (South Africa) said that schools were essential facilities to develop the minds of children. It was disturbing that they could become military targets when occupied by rebels, as children who were still on those premises could be used as human shields. According to the law of war, certain facilities must not be targeted. He therefore asked how to ensure the security of occupied schools and strengthen both the law and respect for the law to prevent those crimes.

54. **Mr. Cottier** (Observer for Switzerland) said that respect for international humanitarian and human rights law was paramount. Switzerland therefore called on all parties to conflict to fulfil their obligations and allow humanitarian organizations to access populations in need. Education was also crucial. The 75 million children living in countries affected by conflict had the right to an education; it was not simply a matter of political will. The international community must act effectively and swiftly so that those children would not become a lost generation. Integrated protection and education programmes provided a solution, as those areas were mutually reinforcing. He was interested in hearing the views of the panellists in that regard. The international community must also strengthen collaboration between humanitarian and development actors and ensure flexible coordination in fragile contexts. A holistic approach would allow for better

protection, prospects and quality of life for children living in emergency and crisis situations.

55. **Ms. Vives Balmaña** (Andorra) said that children suffered the repercussions of armed conflict without having the ability to resolve them. Her delegation was fully committed to addressing the problems faced by children in armed conflict and wished to know more about the progress made by the panellists' organizations in that regard. She also asked how Member States could improve advocacy, in addition to providing funds. An emphasis on values could bring about real change in extreme situations and ensure respect for international law, as attacks on infrastructure, especially schools, gave cause for concern. Her Government also believed that education was paramount.

56. **Mr. Islam** (Observer for Bangladesh) said that his country was currently hosting 700,000 Rohingyas, 58 per cent of whom were children. In that context, he asked how to address the cross-border dimension of children in armed conflicts or humanitarian crises.

57. **Mr. Mardini** (Director for the Near and Middle East, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that, under international humanitarian law, schools were protected civilian objects. However, in time of war, when the facilities were used by a party to the conflict as a military base and there was no evidence that children or teachers were in the school, the other party could make the case that the facility had lost its civilian use and had become a military target. In that instance, the school would lose its protected status because it had been deliberately used for military purposes, which was considered a violation of international humanitarian law. The ICRC staff on the ground would raise its concern directly with that party and always encourage them not to occupy schools, water infrastructure, hospitals or health centres. Children and civilians were always protected under international humanitarian law.

58. Regarding the cross-border dimension of children in armed conflict, civilians fleeing conflict situations in search of safety had the right to seek refuge in neighbouring countries or in other villages within the same country. Under the principle of non-refoulement, civilians should not be pushed to return to their country of origin if they would be exposed to risks to their security or physical integrity. Humanitarian organizations, such as ICRC, supported refugee populations while factoring in the need to support host communities as well. Communities in Jordan and Lebanon had hosted large numbers of Syrian refugees; humanitarian programmes should not be designed exclusively for refugees when host communities were also in dire need of support.

59. **Ms. Fore** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the representative of Spain had drawn attention to a very interesting dichotomy. Nevertheless, the utmost priority was attached to helping children and young persons. UNICEF provided assistance to both the school system itself and any children who were not allowed into the school system, while continuing to work with all parties to allow those children to participate.

60. With regard to middle-income countries, UNICEF had recently released a report on fragile States. Given that every country had areas that were more or less developed, fragility existed in every State. Sustainable public-private partnerships would be essential to addressing that issue in the future.

61. With regard to the targeting of schools, members of UNICEF shared the concerns of the representative of South Africa and had been urgently discussing the importance of protecting both schools and hospitals. It was also important to protect children on their way to and from school, which continued to be an issue in a number of countries.

62. In response to the representative of Switzerland, she said that one of the issues with regard to education was a lack of early funding. Rapid-response finance mechanisms had a significant impact in humanitarian crises. The funding mobilized by Education Cannot Wait had allowed UNICEF to act quickly in Bangladesh. Early funding had also played a role in combating Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

63. With regard to advocacy, videos were an excellent way to engage the public, both online and on public television stations. UNICEF, Education Cannot Wait and other entities had produced several videos that could be shared with Member States. There were also a number of initiatives that Member States could join to improve advocacy, including the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack and the Safe Schools Declaration.

64. Responding to the representative of Bangladesh, she said that host communities should be supported. In addition, the language barrier was one of the first areas that needed to be addressed in cross-border issues. When dialects were compatible, children had a chance to continue their education. If that was not the case, they needed to learn the local language and be admitted into local school systems. Furthermore, many school systems did not allow refugee children to enrol unless they had a birth certificate, which many did not. It would therefore be helpful to provide them with identity documents. The 16,000 Rohingya children who had

been born in Bangladesh since August 2017 would face difficulties without identity documents or citizenship.

65. **Ms. Sherif** (Director of Education Cannot Wait) said that some Council members were receiving refugees, and their Governments were providing a great deal of support. As for compliance with international law, it was important to remember that the Government of Bangladesh was receiving the refugees, not committing the crimes. It had been extremely generous to the Rohingyas and had supported Education Cannot Wait in creating a framework for the education of refugees, which was a significant step forward.

66. The international community must support initiatives like the Portuguese programme for tertiary education. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack was a good example of what could be done to strengthen protections for civilians in armed conflict in order to reinforce international law. It was important to support law enforcement mechanisms, including international tribunals, and ensure that the Security Council was guided and inspired by the international community so that accountability was maintained.

67. **Ms. Malek** (South Sudanese refugee and founder of Stand for Education) said that the international community must work together. Many organizations shared core values and were working towards the same goals to determine how to provide education. There should be a focus on girls' education, including menstrual hygiene management. Furthermore, teaching children in their own language would provide better, quality education.

68. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked the President to share his experience as a refugee and why the issue of children in armed conflict was important to him.

69. **The President** said that he had requested the inclusion of a panel on children in armed conflict during the current humanitarian affairs segment. Refugees sometimes walked day and night, uncertain of their future or their destination, knowing only that they would be safe from persecution, imprisonment or death. They would arrive in a foreign country to seek refuge, surrender themselves and ask for protection. Many had no identity and only a change of clothes. In his case, he had fled apartheid South Africa in 1976 because thousands of children had been killed. He had been alone and unable to contact his parents to inform them of his whereabouts. Eventually, he had returned to South Africa, and Nelson Mandela had been released. He urged participants not to forget about refugees because they could become the leaders of tomorrow.

70. He had not attended school; he had been a guerrilla fighter, living in the forest. During that time, he had been taught that schools, hospitals and water facilities were off limits; attacks on white children and civilians violated the law; and the symbol of the red cross was to be respected. And yet, the police had attacked and killed schoolchildren, including inside schools. He was surprised that current fighters were not taught to respect those facilities. He hoped that ICRC would intensify its contact with host countries, as some Governments had contact with fighters. The international community should require those Governments to take responsibility when international humanitarian law was not respected.

71. Furthermore, he urged host countries to provide some form of identity to refugees, especially to school-aged children. A number of countries had issued him a passport when he had not had documents. Providing refugees with an identity gave them a sense of responsibility and belonging, thereby restoring some of their dignity. It also gave them something to protect. The international community should appeal to Governments to assist children crossing the border in that regard.

72. Organizations such as UNICEF, ICRC and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should provide a means of communication to refugees in host countries. After 10 years in exile, he had finally been able to speak with his parents in South Africa thanks to a Scandinavian humanitarian initiative. Even children who were 2 or 3 years of age would always remember their mother's name. Children could also use mobile applications to communicate face-to-face.

73. Within the United Nations, a resolution should be drafted to reinforce the sanctity of schools and hospitals. If Governments were not able to negotiate with hostage-takers without invading a complex, then they must find another method to target rebels hiding in schools and hospitals to ensure that children were safe and that those buildings were not attacked. The international community had a collective responsibility to strengthen international humanitarian and human rights law to enhance protection for the increasing number of children caught up in conflicts.

74. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that children in conflict were usually dependent on older persons, often persons with disabilities. He wondered how the international community could give greater consideration to the caregivers of children and asked what needed to be done to restore the sanctity of places like schools and hospitals.

75. **Mr. Mardini** (Director for the Near and Middle East, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC))

said that more armed groups had emerged over the previous seven years than in the previous seven decades. He hoped that it would be possible to restore the practice of not targeting schools and hospitals in conflicts. However, violations of international humanitarian law were often not punished by sanctions. As a result, armed groups and States had no incentive to improve their behaviour. Perhaps the public could play a role in bringing about change. Support provided by States to any party to the conflict should be conditional upon a zero-tolerance policy for attacks on hospitals, health-care providers, schools and teachers. Unfortunately, despite Security Council resolution 2286 (2016) on the protection of health-care services and infrastructure in armed conflict, attacks against health-care facilities had increased. The gap between rhetoric, intentions and principles and the reality on the ground could be bridged only if those who provided weapons and sponsored parties to the conflict were more serious about respect for the basic rules of war.

76. **Ms. Fore** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the story shared by the President illustrated the fact that protecting schools, hospitals or water systems could be a local commitment and would take place on the ground informally if child soldiers and militants had grown up knowing that they needed to protect their communities' facilities and people. Nevertheless, the international community should place greater emphasis on protection. UNICEF was committed to finding ways to bring that issue to the attention of the public, as the targeting of aid workers had reached a level that must not be accepted. And yet, the problem continued to grow.

77. When trauma occurred, it was very important to provide immediate psychosocial support to children and parents. UNICEF had a number of community aid programmes for young parents, both mothers and fathers. In 2018, the Fund would be focusing on primary and community health care, in partnership with the World Health Organization and other organizations. An agenda for young people would be launched in September 2018, with United Nations agencies, public and private partners and Member States.

78. **Ms. Sherif** (Director of Education Cannot Wait) said that, as a human rights lawyer, she was inspired when the conversation turned to international human rights law and the need for protection. She also wondered why the various enforcement mechanisms were not working. While laws must be enforced and respected, ultimately, humanity needed to be restored. The best way to do so was through the value systems imparted to children and young persons in their formative years through education. The ability to think critically, feel compassion and empathy, respect a system of coexistence and resolve conflicts peacefully were all a part of the value system. For that reason, education was life-saving and should be a priority before, during and after conflict.

79. **Ms. Malek** (South Sudanese refugee and founder of Stand for Education) said that, while children were very vulnerable and fragile, they were also the most aware. It was important to listen to the needs of children and young persons because they would be the leaders of the future. The international community must invest in children's education, which should be free and must be provided during crisis. Humanitarians needed to be able to respond immediately to avert the loss of life. Lastly, collaboration was vital to achieving results; in the words of her favourite African proverb: "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, we go together."

80. **Mr. Islam** (Observer for Bangladesh) said that, while the discussion had been more focused on reactive approaches to the issue of children in armed conflict, it was also important to address the root causes of conflicts. There must also be discussion on the process of returning refugees to their country of origin, where the future to which they aspired could best be secured.

81. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that prevention was the single greatest overriding theme across the United Nations, and his office would carefully consider the suggestions and points that had been made during the meeting.

82. **The President** said that the panel discussion's message to children was that they had not been forgotten. Member States needed to reflect on what had been done in the past and what now needed to be enhanced to better address those issues. He encouraged them to share their reflections to ensure that the circumstances of children improved. His own country, South Africa, was committed to taking action in that regard.

83. Children in armed conflict would be the leaders of the future. It was therefore important to nurture them as they grew and to ensure that they were not condemned to a futureless world, pushed to radicalization, extremism and armed conflict. The international community must lift them up and give them hope so that they could contribute to a peaceful world in which all children could live in safety.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

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President: Mr. Matjila (Vice-President) ..... (South Africa)

Contents

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

High-level panel discussion: "Addressing the challenges, risks and impacts of extreme weather events and climate change on the most vulnerable"

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Matjila (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/73/78–E/2018/54)

High-level panel discussion: "Addressing the challenges, risks and impacts of extreme weather events and climate change on the most vulnerable"

1. **The President** said that the panel would explore how the humanitarian system could better address the challenges related to extreme weather events and climate change and their humanitarian impacts. Participants would discuss how to improve preparation for and response to slow- and sudden-onset disasters and climate change, and identify strategies, best practices and lessons learned that could be harnessed to ensure prevention, resilience and the protection of vulnerable persons. The panellists would assess the implications of the disaster landscape and climate horizon for humanitarian action and opportunities for collaboration with development and climate actors. They would share their experiences at the national and regional levels, including responses to recent major disasters such as the Atlantic hurricane season of 2017 and the El Niño event of 2015/2016. Although in both cases, the collective response had been better than in the past, gaps, challenges and opportunities needed to be addressed in order to improve preparedness for future events.

2. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that 2017 had been among the three warmest years on record and the warmest year without an El Niño event. In that year, drought and other climate-related events had triggered food crises in 23 countries, with more than 39 million food-insecure people requiring urgent assistance, and 19 million people had been newly displaced by natural disasters in 135 countries and territories. Yet the humanitarian sector had never been more effective, mobilizing more funding than ever and reaching millions of vulnerable people every year.

3. In response to the El Niño event of 2015/2016, one of the strongest on record, the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General on El Niño and Climate had produced a blueprint for action to guide Governments and partners in their efforts to prevent such episodes from becoming disasters. Standard operating procedures had also been developed to turn early warning into early action. Most disasters were predictable, but the current appeals-driven humanitarian funding architecture did not incentivize early action. The Central Emergency Response Fund and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs were exploring ways to employ more anticipatory, data-driven models of funding to promote early action. Response plans that were tied to contingency financing or risk insurance could enable a swift response. The private sector could contribute through humanitarian impact bonds.

4. The lessons from the El Niño event of 2015/2016 and the Atlantic hurricane season of 2017 included the following: national, regional and international actors needed to collaborate in managing disaster risk; evacuation plans, the pre-positioning of assistance and the predeployment of aid workers had saved countless lives in the Caribbean; and risk insurance had paved the way for recovery.

5. She invited the panel to consider how to ensure that early warning would lead to effective early action; what obstacles hindered response and how to overcome them; how to build capacity at the local, national and regional levels to enhance the resilience of vulnerable people to shocks; and how to ensure better coordination of preparedness and response at every level of government. Turning to Ms. Goddard, Director of the International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia University, she asked how the main trends of climate and disaster risk would evolve in the next 10 to 20 years and what the practical implications would be for the international humanitarian system and its capacity to prepare and respond effectively.

6. **Ms. Goddard** (Director, International Research Institute for Climate and Society, Columbia University), panellist, said that climate variability was becoming an increasingly pressing issue. The dominant global trend, which would continue over the next 20 years and beyond, was temperature change, resulting in heat-related disasters and affecting rainfall. Changes in rainfall patterns led to an increase in the severity of storms and longer dry periods, which could have a measurable impact on agriculture and the viability of crops. Decadal-scale variability affected the Sahel in particular, where rainfall patterns were influenced by very small changes in ocean temperature patterns, potentially leading to very dry or very wet periods spanning several decades. Random variability could offset or exacerbate expected climate change trends, and natural variability could also interfere with expectations.

7. Global climate changes were putting more people and assets in harm's way, requiring more humanitarian

assistance and putting pressure on food and water systems. Given that the impacts of an El Niño or La Niña event were influenced by seasonality, if an event identical to El Niño of 2015/2016 were to occur in a few years, it would almost certainly have different consequences. For example, government officials in Kenya had based their preparations for the El Niño event of 2015/2016 on the unprecedented level of rainfall brought by the 1997-1998 event, but in 2015/2016, the rainy season had turned out to be only slightly wetter than average. While the climate community could not recommend what level of preparedness a locality should take, it could indicate precautions that would avoid a certain level of impact. Although El Niño and La Niña events were associated with the occurrence of a high number of disasters, they were in fact helpful in terms of preparedness and early action. During an El Niño or La Niña year, the impact of disasters could be more accurately predicted, helping to ensure that the necessary preparations would be made.

8. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked Mr. Prasad, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations, to outline the key challenges facing Fiji as a result of climate change and the frequency and intensity of weather events.

9. **Mr. Prasad** (Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations), panellist, said that, for Fiji and many of the Pacific islands, the only certainty with respect to disasters was uncertainty. Hurricanes and cyclones, which used to occur from December to February, could now strike in May, and drought, which usually occurred in June and July, could now come towards the end of the year. As a result, it was difficult for Governments to make predictions and therefore plan for budgets, allocate resources and deliver on development targets. When events struck, funds had to be reallocated for emergency relief and long-term recovery efforts. Core development suffered as a consequence, with education, health, social services and care of older persons taking a serious hit.

10. Four sets of challenges would have to be addressed. First, given that the intensity of events would increase, exploring ways to de-risk the uncertainty and alleviate some of the pressure would allow Governments to focus on their core social and human development priorities. Second, with regard to the response to humanitarian disasters, the architecture of the humanitarian system needed to be more cohesive, with Governments, the United Nations system and bilateral and other development agencies working together. Third, political will was required to deal with the current level of uncertainty. Development partners, including multilateral banks, needed to ensure that they had the capabilities and levels of resources necessary for responses. Fourth, Governments should be aware well in advance of the instruments at their disposal for responding to humanitarian disasters. Innovative financing instruments were one such example; Fiji had issued a green bond in 2017, but a range of options could be explored.

11. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked Mr. Jackson, Executive Director of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, to outline the key lessons from the Atlantic hurricane season of 2017 in terms of preparedness, response and resilience at various levels.

12. **Mr. Jackson** (Executive Director, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency), panellist, speaking via video link from Colombia, said that the weather events of the previous year, particularly Hurricanes Irma and Maria, had highlighted the exposure of the Caribbean region, making it all the more important to address the underlying risks. Current capacities were limited, many States faced challenges of poverty and of development planning, and it was difficult to respond to the impact of weather events on multiple islands at once.

13. The four areas of focus of the Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy and Programming Framework 2014-2024 were institutional capacity-building; knowledge management for informed decision-making; key sectors of development in each country and the region; and community resilience, including early-warning systems and livelihood protection. Key lessons learned from the weather events of 2017 were that it was necessary to enhance response capacity for multiple catastrophic events; build and enforce standards and codes for land use and management; improve perpetual readiness, particularly for fast-onset hazards; address the enormous gaps in adequate disaster management financing, especially with respect to insurance instruments and contingent credit facilities, while bearing in mind that many Caribbean States were highly indebted and therefore had trouble providing financing for insurance to cover the risks they faced; and increase understanding of vulnerabilities and hazards.

14. A review of post-disaster reports had shown that it was necessary to expand efforts in five key areas. The first area was social protection mechanisms for the most vulnerable populations; many States did not have modern systems in place to deal with the impact of a

disaster. The second area was safeguarding infrastructure; more than half of losses were related to the transportation and infrastructure sector. The third area was economic diversification; the majority of investment was in tourism, which was related to coastal infrastructure and was sensitive to climate-related hazards. The fourth area was enhancing the environmental protection agenda; prosperity was linked to a sound environment and ecosystem. The fifth area was operational readiness; small States would bear the impact of climate events over the next decade.

15. With regard to resilience, a more comprehensive risk management agenda was currently being promoted and mainstreamed. Caribbean States were developing resilience and strategies for disaster recovery, balancing urgent needs with important preparations and working to better understand the requirements of a resilient community of citizens who demanded disaster restitution from the Government. Countries were considering incentives and disincentives to the creation of an enabling environment; the current period was transformational for those affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria and for States that had high debt profiles. It was also an opportunity to incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals and relevant strategies into national development plans for disaster management.

16. The gains of climate mitigation and sustainable energy should be leveraged and financing for integrated actions plans should be harmonized. Debt reduction would enable countries to invest consistently in building resilience. At the same time, however, Governments must be accountable and funds must be spent appropriately on building resilient infrastructure, systems and societies. In many coastal States, development would need to be redefined, especially in places where the coastal area available for development was narrow and the interior was hilly and volcanic. Better coordination among all types of government ministries would also be needed, and relevant data and metrics should be employed to track the progress of projects. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 should be harmonized with the Sustainable Development Goals; investment in poverty reduction, environmental preservation, natural resource management, land use and urban spaces would ensure safer and more progressive societies.

17. Severe weather events such as hurricanes and tropical storms as well as geological risks would continue in the future even without a changing climate. It was therefore all the more important to have sufficient financing for disaster response, particularly for small island developing States. Donors and partners should be held accountable for the commitments made in the context of the Agenda for Humanity and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation. In addition, regional and local institutions should play a leading role, competition should be eliminated, investment and operational readiness should be embraced, development financing should be leveraged, and States should focus on addressing underlying risk drivers.

18. Ensuring the necessary leadership and transformation in the public sector would present challenges in the future, and limited confidence would prevent local institutions from having access to adequate financing. Uneven political support for climate action and disaster risk reduction needed to be balanced out, and a more integrated approach to local planning should be taken. Law enforcement and legal systems would have to be improved and financing opportunities must be coordinated well so that good use could be made of them.

19. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked Mr. Idi-Issa, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, how the Committee addressed the challenges posed by the recurring nature of drought in the Sahel, especially against the backdrop of high vulnerability and multiple, overlapping and mutually reinforcing risks, and how its approach to disaster risk management had evolved.

20. **Mr. Idi-Issa** (Deputy Executive Secretary, Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel), panellist, said that the Committee, which had been created by six countries in 1973 following many years of drought, was mandated to invest in combating food insecurity and desertification to find a new ecological balance in the Sahel. There were currently 13 member States, with Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Togo the most recent to join.

21. Since 2012, the European Union-led Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative, which had been piloted by the Committee under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union, had been developing standards for the implementation of resilience initiatives at the national level. The Committee had invested a great deal in regional cross-border water management and pastoralism programmes. A dialogue mechanism had been established to improve natural resource management and ensure the best investments and infrastructure for preventing conflicts and alleviating pressure on production. Best practices for sustainable

management had been implemented to conserve limited water resources, given the unpredictability of the rainy season. The Regional Training Centre for Agrometeorology and Operational Hydrology and their Applications had developed models for early warning and vulnerability analysis. In the Sahel, the rainy season was the most important season for agricultural production. Water management techniques had been adopted to enable production during the longer dry period. Techniques and best practices were disseminated to civil society, international non-governmental organizations and member States to make them available to communities.

22. The Committee had helped to establish institutional mechanisms for the prevention and management of food crises. Through the food crisis prevention network of the Sahel and West Africa Club, the Committee and its development partners, namely, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Famine Early Warning System Network, met annually to discuss the results of the analysis of risk zones. Dialogue frameworks were in place to enable development partners, civil society and Governments to come together at all levels to develop planning procedures for programmes and projects, as well as their follow-up and assessment. Since its creation, the Committee had strengthened dialogue and improved the capacity of its community and technical services on the ground. Its training centre on rural development assisted member States in building the capacity necessary to help villages.

23. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked Mr. Béavogui, Director-General of African Risk Capacity, to summarize how African Risk Capacity had been addressing the impact of El Niño and La Niña episodes and to share the agency's main achievements, as well as best practices and lessons learned that could be helpful for other regions.

24. **Mr. Béavogui** (Director-General, African Risk Capacity), panellist, said that, in the light of the frequency and unpredictable variability of climate-related events, African Heads of State had decided to establish African Risk Capacity in 2012. With financial assistance from Germany and the United Kingdom, the agency had established an insurance company in 2014 to begin pooling risk. By doing so, Governments had been able to transfer their risk to the market. Since the agency's creation, 33 members of the African Union had signed the establishment agreement, and 17 countries had active memorandums of understanding, a precondition for engaging in business with the insurance company. Eight countries had already purchased insurance, and the Governments had paid about $56 million in premiums and transferred underwritings of about $400 million to the market. Drought and other climate-related events had since occurred in four countries, Senegal, Mauritania, the Niger and Malawi, resulting in payouts. The agency was preparing for cyclones and excess rainfall, as well as developing products for outbreaks and epidemics.

25. The following lessons had been learned by African Risk Capacity: membership and ownership were essential in driving awareness; demand for products was increasing in both the public and private sectors; the implementation of insurance required a multidisciplinary network and real partnership, with consideration given to political sensitivities; despite the appetite of Governments to participate in insurance schemes, they faced budgetary constraints and fiscal space was tightening; and the role of donors was critical in stimulating insurance schemes and contributing to the overall humanitarian response.

26. Although insurance should be the last resort and was not a panacea, one advantage of it was that it allowed countries to receive fast payment. Another advantage was that, by pooling risk, countries were able to reduce costs and were motivated to address disaster risk management policy issues in order to build the right policies. Rather than inventing new ways of doing things, it was easier to scale up existing social protection mechanisms and tighten their link with the humanitarian effort on the continent.

27. With regard to constraints, he noted that climate insurance was cost-effective for high-impact, large-scale and low-frequency events, but was not always cost-effective for small-scale and frequent events. Insurance should therefore be part of a package together with other mechanisms, such as social protection and contingency funding. Another constraint was the difficulty faced by some countries, in particular in the Sahel, in paying the premium. Technology was still a challenge, and efforts were being made to build trust around the software currently in use, such as cutting-edge software for drought. Strong partnerships and the coordination and coherence of efforts would be required to face the challenges ahead. He hoped that the United Nations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs would take the lead in that direction.

28. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked Ms. Lubrani, United Nations Resident Coordinator of the United Nations

Development Programme Pacific Office, to describe the key challenges and lessons learned in the Pacific region in terms of preparing and responding to disasters, and how the United Nations could support national and regional authorities in managing disaster and climate risks.

29. **Ms. Lubrani** (United Nations Resident Coordinator, United Nations Development Programme Pacific Office), panellist, speaking via video link from Fiji, said that her daily work as Resident Coordinator involved humanitarian support for countries in the wake of disasters. Given the certainty that a disaster would occur at least once a year in the Pacific, climate change disaster management had been a priority when developing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the region. The United Nations was also promoting risk-informed development and partnerships. For example, a disaster resilience council had been created in Fiji to enable the private sector to work with Governments and partners on humanitarian response and preparedness. She chaired the Pacific Humanitarian Team, which had learned many lessons from Tropical Cyclone Gita. The manner in which the United Nations conducted its humanitarian response was widely appreciated, and its work on preparedness had seen tangible results. Responses were tailored to the specific context of small island developing States, as well as to each individual country.

30. Efforts were being made to implement the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, which brought together the humanitarian, climate change and disaster agendas. Tools and mechanisms needed to be improved to assist Governments with post-disaster recovery and reconstruction. Financing was important in that regard, but often took a long time to be delivered. Governance should be strengthened, as lengthy periods of recovery could lead to political instability, further stalling recovery and reconstruction efforts. Risk and preparedness should be mainstreamed in national disaster management offices and ministries to enable planning for quick recovery.

31. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked the panellists to respond to the question of how early-warning and early-action approaches could be integrated more systematically into the humanitarian system to create an anticipatory system, a question submitted electronically by the delegation of Germany via a real-time audience interaction and polling system.

32. **Ms. Goddard** (Director, International Research Institute for Climate and Society, Columbia University) said that the German Red Cross had provided significant support, enabling many pilot projects to be carried out. The Institute had been working with the World Food Programme and the Red Cross on early warning and early action with forecast-based financing, concepts that were at odds with the conventional methods of the humanitarian system, whereby a disaster would occur and its impacts would be brought to the attention of donors, who would then release funds to address the problems.

33. It was more difficult to mobilize funding for anticipatory action since compelling and heart-wrenching images from disasters did not yet exist. However, anticipatory action had great potential not only to reduce the loss of life and property, but also to save the money of the investors who were supporting humanitarian work. To realize that potential, the information being used in forecast-based financing needed to be objective.

34. International organizations such as the Red Cross could use the forecast of an El Niño or La Niña event, for example, to begin staging and planning for its results and to ask for financial input to address the expected consequences of the event. Localized information relevant to shorter time scales would be different depending on its source, and it was important to ensure that communities could use such information to take action. It would be difficult to design a one-size-fits-all approach.

35. It was also important to note that not all forecasts were equally useful. Some weather prediction and climate models were better than others; to a large extent, their effectiveness depended on how they were used. Even the best models were not perfect, and uncertainties meant that it was nearly impossible to judge whether any given model had accurately predicted an event. However, over time, it was possible to determine whether a forecast system was providing the right level of confidence. Quantitative uncertainty needed to be meaningful in order to make a cost-benefit assessment of information affecting a decision. Such assessments were, in turn, necessary to show donors that their investments were informed and fiscally sound. Verification of the information was also important, and States were encouraged to ask whether the weather, seasonal climate or climate change forecasts worked as advertised. Asking such questions would facilitate transparent processes to be used for humanitarian benefit by entities such as the Red Cross, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.

36. **Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador) said that the humanitarian agenda, the climate change agenda and the

global disaster risk reduction agenda, namely, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, needed to be integrated to prevent and respond to both slow- and sudden-onset disasters. He asked how the humanitarian segment of the Council could bring added value to the discussions on uniting those agendas to avoid duplication of General Assembly resolutions and the work of the regional and global platforms of the Sendai Framework. The Council could help the entire United Nations system to recognize that the humanitarian impact of the environment and natural disasters was often felt by middle-income countries, which had neither the option of debt cancellation nor access to immediate financing on preferential terms. Indeed, after the Atlantic hurricane season of 2017, many Caribbean countries had reported that their current classification prevented them from gaining access to cooperation funds for long-term recovery. The Council could also advocate a risk-informed approach in the restructuring of United Nations country teams whereby all agencies would have to contribute to the efforts of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to achieve the objectives set out in paragraph 18 (e) and (g) of the Sendai Framework regarding national reduction strategies and early warning systems, respectively.

37. **Mr. Hawke** (Observer for New Zealand) said that climate change risks would increase in the future, affecting smaller and island States in particular and thus posing a huge challenge for sustainable development and planning. Local communities as well as national Governments and the international community were more seized of the issue. Though there was no substitute for building capacity at the country level, it was important to start "thinking local". Disaster management offices and agencies were often small and marginalized and operated on a part-time basis. They needed to become a core part of the civil service working at the heart of public policy and planning. He asked how the political support of decision makers could be strengthened to bring more investment and longer-term planning for resilience and make it the core of public policy.

38. **Mr. Klose-Zuber** (Germany) said that it was well known that his country advocated a paradigm shift in the humanitarian system. Referring to the question read out by the Assistant-Secretary-General, he said that it was important to find ways to scale up early warning and early action approaches in the humanitarian system, and operationalize the system with scientific data. As one of the current challenges was the lack of willingness to invest unless there was 100 per cent certainty that a humanitarian crisis would occur, forecasting at different scales was vital. The seasonal forecasts of El Niño and La Niña should be combined with national weather information and short-term forecasts to define actionable windows of opportunity. The current practice was for Governments to wait until a disaster materialized and needs were certain before they took action.

39. Early action meant action taken during the period before a disaster struck in order to address it as an imminent threat and thereby reduce the suffering it caused, rather than responding to it afterward. Along with the Red Cross and the World Food Programme, Germany supported such an approach to developing forecast-based financing mechanisms; in that connection, clear scientific thresholds should be defined and linked to financing. That financing for early action was extremely important and would be integrated into mechanisms such as the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in which actions would be funded automatically as soon as early-warning thresholds were met. The Start Network and its Crisis Anticipation Window performed a similar function in the context of non-governmental organizations. In the United Nations context, the Central Emergency Response Fund was a very valuable instrument for funding early action; his delegation strongly advocated its deployment within the windows of opportunity between forecasts and actual disasters.

40. Lastly, the number of disaster-displaced persons worldwide was growing each year, and if the idea of leaving no one behind was to be taken seriously, more consideration needed to be given to the humanitarian protection of such persons. There should also be stronger links between risk reduction instruments, including forecast-based financing and risk insurances.

41. **Mr. Wang** Xu (China) said that natural disasters had a significant impact on his country and many of those disasters were climate-related. In China, the administrative arrangements for disaster prevention, reduction and relief at the central and local levels had been strengthened and improved. That approach included mechanisms for more robust cross-sector coordination, for more comprehensive area-based administration and for encouraging greater community and market engagement, as well as capacity-building for integrated disaster reduction. The country was also launching a new generation of a national platform for releasing emergency early-warning information so as to enhance capacities for monitoring, forecasting and warning of climate-related disasters.

42. China had supported and participated in international exchange and cooperation by way of platforms such as the United Nations International Conference on Space-based Technologies for Disaster Management, which it had co-hosted in 2017, and the Asian Science and Technology Conference for Disaster Reduction, which it had co-hosted in 2018. Participants in those conferences had focused on building resilience using space data, and had called on the international community to support scientific and technological innovation and investment for disaster reduction.

43. His country stood ready to enter into practical cooperation with all countries, United Nations agencies and regional organizations to improve disaster monitoring, forecasts and early-warning and information-sharing so as to jointly build up risk-management capacity and disaster resilience. It hoped that the good practices and experiences shared during the current meeting would serve as input for the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development.

44. **Ms. Chazalnoel** (International Organization for Migration) said that because the most common effects of disasters everywhere were forced migration and displacement, it was essential to consider the protection of persons affected by those phenomena. That fact was recognized in the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and much work was currently being done to incorporate migration and displacement management into disaster risk reduction planning.

45. In some contexts, mobility saved lives and allowed people to move out of harm's way. However, it could also compound vulnerabilities if it was not managed properly. As the most vulnerable were those who were trapped in a disaster area and could not move away, it was important to improve the management of migration and displacement. Doing so reduced inherent risks and was a central part of building resilience for vulnerable groups. She asked the panellists how migration and displacement should be included in humanitarian action in the context of extreme weather events and natural disasters.

46. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), referring to another question submitted electronically during the meeting, asked the panellists what steps could be taken to ensure that persons displaced by climate change received the international assistance and protection they needed.

47. **Mr. Lumumba Idi-Issa** (Deputy Executive Secretary, Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel), panellist, responding to the question posed by the representative of New Zealand, said that the issue of political will was delicate and complex; it was unfortunate that decisions were often guided by it.

48. With respect to the problems currently faced by the Committee, some proven tools for analysing vulnerability had been used for the past 30 years at the community and territory levels. The purpose of such tools was to reach consensus among the principal partners involved in combating food insecurity at the bilateral and regional levels. A harmonized framework for risk analysis was available, and all member States agreed to apply a cycle of data analysis comprising collection from specified places, analysis and processing to determine wet season, production season and other trends.

49. Certain member States had to contend with situations in which data was snatched and essentially held hostage by the most powerful party in the political apparatus, which then refused to release the data publicly. As an intergovernmental agency that depended on its member States, the Committee needed to wait for an official publication accepted by the member State in question before taking action. Regardless of whether all grass-roots actors or technicians at the local, regional and national levels agreed on the data, it was sometimes seized and used to leverage certain resources or even influence votes. In such situations in regions or subregions of a country, where the interests of small groups of decision makers were often prioritized, it was perfectly valid to ask some questions. Obtaining reliable data necessitated transparency in data collection and analysis as well as the involvement of all stakeholders at the grass-roots level.

50. Stakeholders needed to learn to work with each other more consistently in planning and action. At the end of the month, for instance, representatives of all member States would arrive in Dakar with data and official instructions to examine the situation in the Sahel. Political decisions needed to be as strong and transparent as possible in that type of setting in order to accurately determine where the bottlenecks were, and where and how to act. That would facilitate connections between humanitarian officers and the partners that financed long-term development actions, and also provide opportunities to tackle problems faced by communities.

51. **Mr. Prasad** (Fiji) said that the focus should be local action that was nationally coordinated and

internationally supported. Adaptation and resilience included many local actions, such as moving medicine in three- to four-month stocks to local health centres so that it was unnecessary to deploy the military to deliver assistance after a disaster. That would entail improving procurement, governance, storage capabilities and management. Adopting a climate-smart approach required many integrated local actions, and he would be interested in learning more about the methods used by China. The United Nations could play a role in providing reinforcement, support, knowledge and coherence for such actions. In a minor disaster, the bulk of the resources needed for assistance were furnished by the local government, whereas in a major disaster, the national Government provided most of the financing.

52. **Mr. Béavogui** (Director-General, African Risk Capacity) said that developing local capacities was crucial to achieving sustainability and efficiency. It was therefore necessary to strengthen public policies at the local and national levels, improve risk profiling capacities, plan well for contingencies and promote innovative financing and implementation. Continuous research and development, including expertise in mathematical modelling, indexing and social protection issues, among other areas, was needed in order to build a connected and effective system. Partnerships with experts in their respective fields were important for future progress and good results.

53. **Ms. Lubrani** (United Nations Resident Coordinator, United Nations Development Programme Pacific Office), speaking via video link from Fiji, said that there were good examples of cross-sectoral approaches in the Pacific region. In order to address disaster preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction, the new generation of country teams needed to plan and work differently from how they had in the past. In that regard, it was important to have expertise available in-house.

54. Climate-induced migration, as it related to displacement, was currently being studied and addressed by such entities as the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Development Programme, but more follow-up was needed. As an example of internal displacement, there were discussions about moving the entire population of an island of Vanuatu because of volcanic activity. It was important to consider such situations well in advance and account for all their aspects, some of which were quite politically sensitive, including access to land, property concerns and urban planning. In the Pacific context in particular, it was important to hone expertise and enable all parts of the system to best support Governments in their efforts to plan and respond appropriately.

55. Responding to a question about her role, she said that, as Resident Coordinator, she was tasked with bridging divides between humanitarian response actors and national disaster management organizations and ensuring that the latter were empowered and could turn their focus from one disaster to preparation for the next, with the seamless involvement of ministries of finance and planning. The United Nations was working with Governments in some of the countries where that would require a review of legislation and procedures.

56. **Ms. Goddard** (Director, International Research Institute for Climate and Society, Columbia University) said that the capacities of national meteorological and hydrological services and the agencies that they supported should be strengthened to equip countries to create their own data. There was a political risk if information coming into the country was different from that produced by the country itself. At the same time, it was important to insist on the objectivity of data. Experts responsible for delivering such information and data should be able to take on some of the challenges and then help communities to work with actors and decision makers in such areas as humanitarian work and natural resources to enable them to better understand the situations.

57. In the context of the World Meteorological Organization, the World Climate Conference-3 and the Global Framework for Climate Services acting at the national level, the four pillars of climate services required incrementally higher levels of expertise. It was critical to have such expertise and to enable the people creating, translating and using that information to work with the best and most objective information possible.

58. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator), summarizing the discussion, said that the specific vulnerabilities of small island States meant that climate change was an existential threat to them. Coordination and partnerships should be enhanced at all levels, while recognizing the critical roles national and regional organizations played in responding to extreme weather events. Humanitarian development and climate actors needed to work more closely with each other and pool their resources, tools and expertise to address the challenges.

59. Given the advances in forecasting and early warning systems, extreme weather events were no longer a surprise, but were rather predictable. Further steps should be taken towards anticipatory approaches to humanitarian assistance. Early warning needed to

translate into early action backed by reliable and timely financing and accurate data to mitigate the impact of extreme weather events and save lives. It was important to have plans and funding for early action in place before a disaster struck, and to scale up innovative financing instruments.

60. Disaster and climate risks should be considered when "building back better" in order to achieve resilient communities and ensure that disaster risk reduction was an integral part of sustainable development. In building the resilience of people vulnerable to climate shocks, the international community could collectively ensure that they were not left behind while addressing the relevant implications for human mobility. The Council had also heard questions and suggestions regarding how to strengthen its work and that of the United Nations.

61. **The President** said that he was shocked to learn of the discussion about moving an entire population from an island. One island in the Caribbean had almost been wiped out. Would that continue to happen in the future, especially over the next 20 to 30 years? He wondered how many times people would have to start over and rebuild their lives from scratch. It was important always to keep the children in mind, as they represented the future of society. Perhaps new settlement designs and construction materials should be considered. Settlement density would continue to increase and the world would be more urban than rural by 2050. What would that mean for humanity, and how should plans for the future be made? Given the reports heard by the Council during the meeting, it seemed likely that many island States would not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The violence and ferocity of recurring natural disasters, such as the 2011 tsunami in Japan, indicated that humans had done wrong to the planet.

62. Climate change was not an abstract threat, unseen and far away on the horizon. In fact, it was already a grim reality for many people, and it was clear that disasters could wipe out years of development gains in just a few hours. Millions of people were forced to leave their homes each year as disasters, climate change, environmental degradation and desertification made their livelihoods, particularly in agriculture, nearly impossible to maintain.

63. However, though extremely destructive, recurring and seasonal disasters were also predictable, and effective preparations could be made in advance, saving lives, livelihoods, time and money. Understanding the challenges and shortcomings of current practices was the first step. Local, national and regional capacities and leadership, supported by international organizations and their partners, would play a key role in strengthening resilience to disasters and the effects of climate change. Forecast-based financing, disaster risk insurance and other forms of innovative financing were encouraging, and should be scaled up to meet needs and complemented by other instruments. There were great opportunities for collaboration on addressing the issues; the international community had a responsibility to seize those opportunities for the benefit of current and future generations.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

United Nations E/2018/SR.39

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
28 September 2018

Original: English

2018 session
27 July 2017–26 July 2018
Humanitarian affairs segment

Summary record of the 39th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 21 June, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Matjila (Vice-President) ..... (South Africa)

Contents

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

High-level panel discussion: "Strengthening local capabilities for sustainable outcomes and local resilience — contribution of humanitarian action"

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18-10174 (E)

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Matjila (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)
(A/73/78–E/2018/54)

High-level panel discussion: "Strengthening local capabilities for sustainable outcomes and local resilience — contribution of humanitarian action"

1. **The President** said that the international humanitarian response system had not always kept pace and exercised sufficient flexibility to adapt mechanisms and funding to growing local, national and regional capacities. International engagement should be based on a good understanding of existing local response capacity and critical gaps. It should be predictable, sustainable and suited to the context.

2. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, said that the localization agenda had been gaining momentum, especially since the World Humanitarian Summit held in 2016. International humanitarian organizations were beginning to shift towards greater collaboration with national and local actors and to increase their visibility and funding. However, all too often they continued to expect the national and local response to adapt to the international one instead of the other way around. She hoped that the panel discussion would provide insight into how to learn about national and local response structures prior to a crisis; adapt coordination structures, funding and programming to the local context and existing capacity from the earliest stages of response; use momentum on transcending the humanitarian-development divide to strengthen local response systems over the long term; and replicate the good practice of countries helping each other in times of crisis.

3. Delegations could use an online question-and-answer platform to submit and vote on questions for the panellists. The questions with the most votes were the most likely to be answered. Turning to the first panellist, the Secretary-General of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, she asked what lessons could be learned from Afghanistan about fostering local system self-sufficiency and how international actors could best support nationally and locally run programmes.

4. **Ms. Mobarez** (Secretary-General, Afghan Red Crescent Society), panellist, said that the Society was one of the oldest humanitarian organizations in Afghanistan. Although originally a government agency, it had long operated independently. Its adherence to the seven fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement had enabled it to remain united and to gain and maintain the trust of State and non-State actors alike. Working in cooperation with the State, it went where the State could not, operating mobile health clinics in Kandahar and dispensing polio vaccinations in rebel territories, including those held by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). It also had an agreement with the State to treat patients with congenital heart disease.

5. The Society was not publicly funded and relied on support from many sources, including foreign Governments and Islamic social finance. Islamic financing was principally in the form of awqaf (endowments), which it used to operate income-generating businesses that funded many of its activities. The Society knew its gaps and its strengths, and it asked for help when needed. For example, it could build a hospital on its own, but it had turned to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for capacity-building and staffing. The Society could not afford to hire the capable, foreign-educated Afghans who wished to remain in Afghanistan as agents of change. She was grateful to its international partners for employing them in its stead and for their assistance in many other areas. There were reasons for hope in Afghanistan, where she, a woman, was now treated as a trusted partner by all parties. Yet the Society would continue to need the assistance of its partners. To meet their requirements of accountability and transparency, it was currently instituting organizational and management reforms involving, inter alia, a suite of resource planning applications to track spending.

6. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked the next panellist, the Director-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection of the European Commission, what more could be done to ensure that international organizations receiving funds adopted approaches that built on existing national and local capacities and reinforced rather than replaced national and local service delivery.

7. **Ms. Pariat** (Director-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, European Commission), panellist, said that the European Union welcomed the efforts of the signatories to the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing to deliver on their commitment to improve localization, as well as the growing number of civil society organizations that had joined the Network for Empowered Aid Response, to which it contributed. Donors could play a key role in promoting

further progress by investing in local capacities and linking their aid to key policy priorities such as preparedness, early action and resilience. Funding should be based on long-term plans agreed with the local actors, which would require opening a dialogue and addressing issues of acceptance and trust.

8. As the custodians of taxpayer money, donors had a duty to ensure that their donations ended up in the right hands; hence the importance of transparency in how the funds were channelled through international organizations to thousands of local entities. One way of improving transparency was by strengthening international umbrella structures like the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which provided a liaison with local affiliates.

9. Localization could be a catalyst for resilience, not only in areas of conflict such as Afghanistan but also in disaster-prone countries such as Haiti, where improved local disaster preparedness and post-disaster response had helped to limit the impact of Hurricane Matthew. However, improving local preparedness and response had taken many years and was an ongoing process, and the same would be true in other countries.

10. As a cross-cutting challenge, localization was hindered by the current project-based financing and partnership models and would be better served by a more holistic approach. Furthermore, donors needed a better understanding of what was preventing local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national entities from becoming the primary humanitarian responders, which could be gained only through peer-to-peer engagement with local and national actors. Local and national actors must also be included in the assessment of risks and the shaping of approaches to emergency response, recovery and development, which would mean moving towards future-oriented, context-driven, adaptive delivery solutions rooted in sustainable recovery and development. Donors should be able to offer new forms of intervention, more insurance packages, more catastrophe bonds and more shock-absorber solutions. Achieving more resilient solutions would require assessing needs, which their local partners knew better than they did, and thinking outside the box. The European Union stood ready to do its part.

11. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked the next panellist, the Head of Operations of the Department for International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, to explain how the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund had supported local agricultural production and the use of local food crops to feed populations across Africa.

12. **Ms. Mathlako** (Head of Operations, Department for International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa), panellist, said that humanitarian assistance was one of the objectives of the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund. Humanitarian projects were designed to benefit both the South African people and the recipients of assistance. For example, to provide food assistance to vulnerable women and children in Lesotho and Swaziland, the Fund had helped smallholder subsistence farmers and small-scale millers in South Africa improve the quality of their crops and flours so that they could be exported through the World Food Programme (WFP). It had also helped South African farmers to diversify. The project had provided dignified humanitarian assistance to neighbouring countries while developing South African local economies.

13. Partnerships with international organizations and local actors were of the utmost importance. In the case of the Lesotho and Swaziland projects, the Fund had partnered with WFP, and in Western Sahara, it was working with the Red Cross. In South Sudan, it would be partnering with local church and mosque groups to provide food assistance to displaced people squatting in Juba, because those groups knew the situation better than anyone else and could provide assistance with dignity. By building capacities, the Fund would ensure that they were able to respond to needs and deliver on assistance once the international players had left.

14. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator), introducing the next panellist, the Chair of the Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council, said that the Council helped to strengthen business resilience by providing a single entry point for the private sector to partner with the national Government and the international response system. She asked the panellist how the international system could better understand existing private-sector capacity before a crisis and what changes international structures could make to give more space to the private sector in an emergency response.

15. **Ms. Hunter** (Chair, Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council), panellist, said that the uncoordinated, inefficient response to the devastation of Tropical Cyclone Winston had led the Connecting Business initiative to partner with the private sector and the Government of Fiji to establish the Council. The Council was grateful to the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance and the United Nations

Development Programme for their support of the initiative, which provided a platform for the private sector to engage with government and non-governmental actors, learn their language and move forward together.

16. More than 85 per cent of businesses in the Pacific were small and medium-sized enterprises. Those companies, which were very vulnerable to disaster, played a key role in small communities as well as in regional supply chains. Given that more than 80 per cent did not have business continuity plans, the Council was partnering with the United States Agency for International Development to develop continuity plans for those enterprises in remote areas of Fiji. The Council had also worked with other partners to build an interactive online toolkit aimed at helping businesses become disaster resilient.

17. It was crucial for non-private-sector actors to understand the multifaceted potential and best use of private-sector support and lay the groundwork for cooperation before disaster struck — by signing memorandums of understanding and long-term agreements, for example. The Council had a seat on the National Disaster Management Committee and a representative in every National Disaster Management Office cluster, and it was working in partnership with them to develop and roll out a national disaster resilience plan.

18. Following Tropical Cyclone Winston, the mobile telecommunications group Digicel had worked with government agencies in Vanuatu and Fiji to conduct surveys in affected areas. Once its mobile telecommunications towers had been back up and running, it had been able to determine how many handset users were on each tower and to push out a questionnaire to help the Government and humanitarian actors assess needs. Digicel continued to work with Governments and the other telecommunications companies to provide disaster-related alerts and education.

19. After Tropical Cyclone Winston, millions of dollars had flowed out of Fiji for disaster relief supplies that could have been used more effectively by local small businesses and communities. To obviate such waste and inefficiency, the Council had worked with WFP to identify the first items needed after a disaster and had then surveyed businesses about their average inventories of those items and where they were kept. Local businesses not only had vast skill sets; they also understood the local values and traditions. Unlike external actors, they could ensure continuity, and they already had a relationship of trust with the Government and the communities.

20. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator), reading from the questions submitted electronically, asked how global coordination and decision-making platforms such as the Council's humanitarian affairs segment could be made more accessible to national and local actors.

21. **Mr. Besson** (Observer for Switzerland) said that his country was working with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to facilitate the Grand Bargain work stream. While he did not have an answer to the moderator's question, he would like to share a few thoughts. Humanitarian assistance should be about saving not only people but also their institutions, businesses and economy — a broader goal that required culture change. The humanitarian system tended to think in terms of implementation and to end up talking about local subcontractors, not partners. That was counterproductive. It should embrace civil society, organizational, institutional and human development, internal preparedness and resilience. It should commit predictable funding so that local partners could engage in long-term processes. Given their fiduciary duties, donors tended to shy away from the risks of long-term commitments, but humanitarian assistance was about taking risks. To create a sense of common agency among all actors, donors must handle power inequalities in a way that allowed genuine dialogue: they must become better listeners.

22. **Mr. Wang** Xu (China) said that good disaster prevention, mitigation and relief required international and local management systems; the active participation and support of society and well managed local disaster mitigation efforts. It should be supported by adequate capacity-building and equipment development, strong local leadership and effective early warning systems, early responses and recovery and reconstruction efforts, as well as international cooperation and the exchange of international experiences and lessons learned.

23. China's natural disaster prevention and alleviation plan called for mapping community-level disaster risks, strengthening the development of community disaster contingency plans and drills, improving community stockpiling of emergency supplies and providing better training for community volunteers. China would participate actively in the international dialogue on cooperation, as well as in international efforts to provide developing countries with more human resources, training, emergency simulations or drills and policy and technical advice and to help them to strengthen disaster prevention, mitigation and relief capacities and improve disaster resilience.

24. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council) said that a statement made earlier in the meeting by the representative of an ActionAid partner, Kids Educational Engagement Project (KEEP), had been struck from the record because KEEP was not accredited.

25. **Ms. Matsumoto** (Japan) said that the Japanese programme Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects offered financial assistance to grassroots projects in 120 countries. Interested organizations should apply directly.

26. **Ms. Gill** (Observer for Australia) said that, in view of what the Council had just heard about the continuity of local private-sector engagement, the motivations for private-sector involvement in resilience and recovery efforts and the importance of small- and medium-sized enterprises for disaster resilience, the humanitarian community should reconsider its thinking about the private sector. Working more directly with local partners created challenges in terms of due diligence and adequate resource management. Unfortunately, donors had a tendency to pass risk on to their intermediaries. Local partners should be free to work to their full capacities without the burden of very strict compliance requirements.

27. Australia was taking steps towards working directly with local NGOs as long-term partners, not contractors. It had identified effective partners and was identifying multi-partnerships. Developing true partnerships required learning and capacity-building on all sides.

28. **Ms. Jackson** (Observer for CARE International) said that she wished to reintroduce the question asked by the representative of ActionAid's Liberian partner KEEP: how could the United Nations system and international NGOs be held to higher standards of transparency and accountability with respect to their Grand Bargain commitments? The question was highly relevant and had been raised by a person who not only was Vice-Chair of the Leadership Council of the Network for Empowered Aid Response but also worked with European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. She would also be interested in specific examples of efforts to seek out partnerships with local women's organizations, which faced additional obstacles to inclusion in the localization agenda.

29. **Mr. Kent** (United States of America) said that he appreciated the honesty of the European Union. As a key donor, the United States faced similar challenges, but it was nevertheless committed to expanding its partnerships with local responders and local and national governments. Regarding the issue of risk transfer, it had partnered with InterAction to conduct research on the transfer of risk between international and local NGOs, which must be fully understood in order to address the challenges of managing and defining risk in complex environments. The United States supported all public-private partnerships that could improve natural disaster resilience.

30. **Mr. Nikoi** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that WFP had been working diligently to keep its localization commitments under the Grand Bargain and had already far exceeded the minimum of 25 per cent of resources transferred to local actors. It was leveraging technology to assess local needs through the mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) initiative. He would like to hear where progress was being made on the localization agenda, and where more remained to be done.

31. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator), reading from the questions submitted electronically, asked how family policies and intervention strategies targeting the family could improve the humanitarian response, reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience among family members and, second, how donors could ensure that often invisible populations, such as women, widows, older persons and persons with disabilities, were involved in leading local humanitarian response policies and action. However, perhaps the Secretary-General of the Afghan Red Crescent Society could begin by answering the question about efforts to partner with local women's organizations.

32. **Ms. Mobarez** (Secretary-General, Afghan Red Crescent Society) said that the international community had stepped up its support for the Afghan Women's Network, which was an umbrella organization for Afghan women's organizations and lobbied for women's causes. As a result, the network was increasingly able to function effectively on its own.

33. Her own organization, which was part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, provided shelters for war widows and education for orphans. It also operated the only institution in the country for women with mental illness.

34. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked the Director-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection of the European Commission what more stakeholders could do to deliver on their Grand Bargain commitments.

35. **Ms. Pariat** (Director-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, European Commission) said that there were three main aspects of localization:

channelling more funds to local partners; increasing the participation of local organizations in needs assessment and response design; and improving the resilience of local systems and local governance through capacity-building. The first aspect was the most complicated for donors, who were accountable for the risks they took with local actors and needed sufficient information to vet them. Because they could not scrutinize millions of local actors themselves, they needed their traditional partners to work more transparently and at least partially vet local partners. With respect to the second aspect, improving the integration of local communities and actors, the Grand Bargain signatories were on the right track and should continue their efforts to include local organizations in needs assessment and response design. For projects relating to the third aspect, the resilience agenda, donors could strengthen the humanitarian and development nexus in order to take advantage of pre-existing relationships between development actors and local organizations and the greater predictability of development funding.

36. One way to make invisible populations more visible was to identify them as a priority in humanitarian funding. That was what the European Union had done in the case of education. In general, it immediately identified how various populations were addressed on agenda issues — not only women and girls but also men and boys — and it would henceforth be paying greater attention to persons with disabilities.

37. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator), reading from the questions submitted electronically, asked how the humanitarian community could ensure that local people were seen not only as a source of knowledge about the local context but also as having inherent capacity to contribute to their communities' betterment.

38. **Ms. Mathlako** (Head of Operations, Department for International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa) said that her department worked directly with local people. For example, in its nutritional assistance programmes, local women were hired and trained to prepare the food, equipping them with skills for the future and enhancing their dignity. Most of the smallholder farmers in its programmes were women, and it had partnered with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to provide them with financial and literacy skills development. To build resilience to future droughts in Namibia, South African contractors were installing boreholes in partnership with local subcontractors, who were also trained in their operation and maintenance. In South Sudan, local people would be responsible for food distribution and storage as well as project management, for which they would receive training.

39. **The President** said that, first of all, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be central to all discussions of humanitarian issues. It was essential to ensure that countries and regions could move ahead on the 2030 Agenda once temporary relief had ended. Second, in economically or politically integrated regions, humanitarian action should aim to build regional capacity and resilience; for example, items for emergency relief should be inventoried and stockpiled at the regional level. Third, data and information from the previous 50 years could be used to identify patterns and prepare for future disasters. In that connection, it was unfortunate that a speaker's credentials sometimes became an issue, as the woman associated with ActionAid had made a valid point: it should be possible to learn from the past and perhaps benefit from her input in future. Fourth, new financing solutions such as resilience bonds and disaster risk insurance should be explored. Fifth, in conflict situations, every effort should be made to capacitate neutral local organizations so that they could serve as fulcrums in no-go areas. Moreover, donors should have differentiated response plans for conflict and non-conflict situations. Lastly, companies sometimes destroyed surplus production to create markets or maintain prices. Instead, they should be able to donate surpluses to emergency supply warehouses. Perhaps the United Nations humanitarian apparatus could inventory all of the food- and equipment-producing companies and set up a donation bank.

40. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked the Chair of the Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council for recommendations on improving coordination with the private sector before a crisis, building private-sector resilience and leveraging private-sector expertise.

41. **Ms. Hunter** (Chair, Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council) said that, because businesses operated on budgets, it was important to give them an idea of what they should budget both to survive a natural disaster and to provide assistance. In addition, companies should be urged to make arrangements with banks for interest holidays on commercial loans so that they could continue to pay their employees if they were completely shut down. They should also be encouraged to take out disaster insurance. As elsewhere, massive numbers of small- and medium-sized enterprises in Fiji were uninsured, and the Disaster Resilience Council allowed the Insurance Council of Fiji to come in and

make presentations to companies on the need for insurance and the options available.

42. It was crucial to understand the private sector's strengths and weaknesses before a disaster by mapping what businesses had available, where it was kept, who they responded to in the event of a disaster and how they responded. Long-term agreements were also important. It all came down to communication and engagement. For that purpose, having an entry point such as the Disaster Resilience Council was key.

43. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked the panellists for their final thoughts.

44. **Ms. Hunter** (Chair, Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council) said that there was a need for more private-sector engagement and visibility in all aspects of humanitarian assistance. Inviting representatives of the private sector to participate in the humanitarian affairs segment was a good first step in a long but worthwhile process.

45. **Ms. Pariat** (Director-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, European Commission) said that coordination, trust and culture change were critical. The humanitarian community should review the way it had hitherto provided assistance and should re-evaluate needs, which were changing, as well as how they could be addressed. Indeed, new technologies might make it possible to bypass intermediaries or provide new solutions. The humanitarian community should also seek better ways to include local voices in the preliminary stage of response design, and it should work to bridge the humanitarian-development divide. Lastly, it needed to improve the coordination of humanitarian assistance, perhaps by having fewer coordinating bodies. Streamlining and improving coordination would require culture change on all sides.

46. **Ms. Mathlako** (Head of Operations, Department for International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa) said that, as a fairly new player in the humanitarian space, South Africa looked forward to collaboration with other development partners. It would always embed partnerships, dignity and local community resilience in its development cooperation.

47. **Ms. Mobarez** (Secretary-General, Afghan Red Crescent Society) said that resilience was impossible without development; humanitarian assistance should therefore be based on programmes, not projects. Capacity training should focus on transparency- and accountability-related skills so that local partners could use tools such as the resource planning application to institute changes that would build trust. She had found the recent panel discussions most informative, particularly with regard to public-private partnerships, disaster insurance and regional solutions.

48. **Ms. Mueller** (Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that the discussion had reaffirmed the Council's understanding that international engagement should reinforce and not replace national and local systems and leadership. International support should be tailored to the context and based on a knowledge of existing national and local capacity, gaps and capacity-building needs. It was of utmost importance to establish partnerships with local responders before crises in order to assess and strengthen the relevant capacities effectively. Different funding practices, including more direct funding to national and local responders, were also essential.

49. The humanitarian community needed to find better ways to link up with existing local, national and regional efforts and should continue strengthening the capacities of local actors through a mix of short-, medium- and long-term measures. Ultimately, the success of international support was measured not only in lives saved but also in the degree to which local capacities, systems and leadership were strengthened.

50. **The President** said that the Council had heard practical examples of how international humanitarian actors could better understand existing national and local coordination and response structures before a crisis. It had heard how the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund had focused on supporting food production, thereby growing the economy in the long term. It had learned lessons from Afghanistan about how donors and international partners could strengthen and support local partners in conflict situations, and about the importance of supporting local women's civil society organizations and giving them a voice in decision-making processes. It had heard how essential it was for international responders to support and use private-sector capacities and networks to prepare for and respond to crises. And, lastly, it had heard about the importance of funding local and national partners and supporting their response capacities on a long-term basis. He hoped that the discussion had challenged all present to reconsider how the humanitarian community could bring about the culture change needed to shift towards a more locally and nationally led response.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations E/2018/SR.40

Economic and Social Council

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Summary record of the 40th meeting
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President: Mr. Matjila (Vice-President) ..... (South Africa)

Contents

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

Closing of the segment

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18-10325 (E)

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Matjila (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/73/78-E/2018/54 and E/2018/L.14)

1. **Ms. Bassols Delgado** (Spain) said that her country attached great importance to compliance with international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. In 2018, it had organized the first annual meeting on international humanitarian law for members of the Security Council, which had focused on the provision of medical care in conflicts and how to improve the implementation of Security Council resolution 2286 (2016). With greater political will, it would be possible to reduce the number of attacks against sick and injured persons, as well as medical personnel and facilities.

2. Humanitarian crises required political solutions. Only by ensuring peace, dialogue and respect for international humanitarian law would it be possible to address needs for food and protection. However, competition for humanitarian funds carried the risk that a focus on the highest-profile crises would come at the expense of other, neglected ones. For that reason, Spain had co-hosted, with Sweden, a side event on trends in humanitarian funding.

3. While Spain welcomed the 2018 draft resolution on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/2018/L.14), it was concerned about a regression in the important area of sexual and reproductive health. It was regrettable that there was no mention of one of the most effective measures in that regard, the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health, which was helping to save the lives of women and children in serious humanitarian situations. Nevertheless, Spain welcomed the additions to the draft resolution on youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, as well as the improvements made with respect to early warning and early response, sexual violence and education.

4. **Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Observer for Brazil) said that the consequences of humanitarian emergencies, particularly the displacement of large populations, should be addressed in a humane and people-centred manner that considered local capacities. As local and national non-governmental organizations received only a very small proportion of all international humanitarian assistance, Brazil commended the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to support existing national networks.

5. In 2018, conflicts had led to an increase in humanitarian needs. Brazil had continued to offer humanitarian visas to those displaced by the war in Syria and had contributed food and medicine through its United Nations partners. The only way to reduce the need for such aid and prevent the resurgence of crisis was to work towards lasting political solutions. Noting that the extreme weather events of the previous year had been exacerbated by climate change, he welcomed the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to promote preparedness, risk analysis and resilience. The Central Emergency Response Fund, to which Brazil had been a frequent contributor, was a financial tool that allowed for quick and flexible responses to emergencies.

6. His delegation also welcomed new elements in the draft resolution, such as the emphasis on the protection of children and persons with disabilities and the importance of risk-informed social protection systems and emergency agricultural support. Brazil had launched humanitarian cooperation initiatives such as the Purchase from Africans for Africa programme, which helped African countries respond to food and agricultural emergencies, and it supported the rehabilitation of vulnerable communities by promoting local solutions, purchasing local food and supporting local markets. In conclusion, he commended the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus through the establishment of a Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Cooperation.

7. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation) said that General Assembly resolution 46/182 should remain the cornerstone of the United Nations system for humanitarian response. States should play a leading role in initiating and coordinating humanitarian response on their own territory and should bear the primary responsibility for providing for those in need. The international community should respect sovereignty and the consent of the host country when providing assistance, as straying from those principles led to the subordination of aid to military and political agendas.

8. Over the past 20 years, the number of natural and industrial disasters had doubled. In multiple regions, acute food insecurity posed a problem and there was a gap between humanitarian demand and supply. Humanitarian partners should demonstrate flexibility and seek new and effective forms of emergency response to large-scale catastrophes. Cooperation in

humanitarian response and disaster prevention was important for providing stable and lasting development.

9. Political approaches were key to reducing the need for humanitarian assistance. According to United Nations figures, up to 90 per cent of humanitarian needs were linked to conflict; it was therefore imperative for the international community to address the root causes and seek diplomatic and political resolutions to conflicts in countries such as Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen. The United Nations should also support national dialogue and the fight against international terrorism. The Russian Federation was actively participating in processes to that end.

10. **Ms. Luo** Jin (China) said that humanitarian assistance should be provided with full respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the recipient countries. Furthermore, the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality must be observed, and international and national laws must be obeyed. Humanitarian issues should not be politicized. China attached great importance to international cooperation in the humanitarian field and supported the centrality of the United Nations in guiding and coordinating humanitarian assistance.

11. Investment in long-term development and enhancing the capacity of States to become self-reliant would help prevent humanitarian crises and reduce humanitarian needs. Peace would be sustainable only when grounded in development and security. China hoped that the international community would increase its financial and technical assistance to developing countries, taking into account their specific needs and realities, so that they could better respond to natural disasters and climate change. It furthermore hoped that disaster relief measures such as technology transfer, education and training would translate into overall improvements in development. Special attention should be paid to children, women and persons with disabilities in responding to humanitarian crises.

12. China, the world's largest developing country, was often at the mercy of a wide range of serious natural disasters. While working hard to respond to those disasters, the country also actively joined international humanitarian relief efforts. In 2017, her Government had provided almost ¥3 billion in emergency humanitarian assistance to 48 countries and six international organizations. It had also provided timely assistance to many disaster-stricken countries through its cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), supporting country-level efforts to address food crises, carry out post-disaster reconstruction and improve nutrition and health care for women and children.

13. **Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) said that resilience in humanitarian crises should be fostered through long-term approaches that focused on development as well as prevention, preparedness and the analysis of vulnerabilities. Effective decisions in humanitarian crises must be based on verified and updated information. Humanitarian interventions could be enhanced through information exchange between Member States and humanitarian actors, which would enable the optimal allocation of resources and lead to a reduction in suffering. In that regard, his delegation regretted the obstacles faced by humanitarian staff as well as the politicization of the suffering of vulnerable populations, particularly women and children. It hoped that measures would be taken to allow humanitarian bodies, principally the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Human Rights Council, to carry out their mandates.

14. Despite a significant increase in contributions under the consolidated appeal process, the financing gap remained significant. Humanitarian actors must work to improve coordination, streamline funding and promote accountability. The effectiveness of humanitarian aid was largely dependent on access to affected populations; in particular, the collection of data on vulnerable populations was indispensable for preventing the misappropriation of humanitarian aid, a reprehensible crime and a serious human rights violation which had been exposed in a number of credible reports. Host countries and humanitarian actors, including partners in the field, shouldered the primary responsibility for preventing such misappropriation. Lastly, his delegation strongly condemned attacks on humanitarian workers. The international community was legally and morally obliged to ensure their safety.

15. **Mr. Awad** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government was committed to providing humanitarian assistance to all Syrians equally, and to cooperating with the United Nations and humanitarian partners. The Syrian Government maintained its principled position that emergency humanitarian aid must be provided in accordance with the guiding principles of the United Nations, in particular, respect for national sovereignty.

16. Unfortunately, the draft resolution that the Council would consider later in the meeting was not balanced, and was consistent with the interventionist positions held by certain States on the subject of humanitarian aid. Those States expressed concern about deteriorating conditions in some countries while intentionally

ignoring others in order to politicize humanitarian crises and obscure the root causes of those crises. The draft resolution thus paid more attention to humanitarian aid delivery during armed conflict than during natural disasters and neglected the operational aspects that were supposed to be of special concern to the Council. Furthermore, it contained paragraphs on "protection" and other controversial concepts while including only one paragraph on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and only passing references to such issues as technology and capacity-building that were critical for addressing humanitarian crises, poverty and food security. Although the draft resolution did not consider terrorist acts to be a major cause of humanitarian crises, it was nevertheless clear to all that terrorism, especially as perpetrated by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Nusrah Front and Boko Haram, was the primary driver of those crises.

17. The draft resolution contained no reference to the adverse effects of unilateral coercive measures imposed by certain States on developing countries, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Those Western States and international forces used their economic influence to further their interventionist political ends. Syria also wished to express its reservations regarding the paragraph on the World Humanitarian Summit, as it rejected all the outcomes of that Summit.

18. **Ms. Eckels-Currie** (United States of America) said that her country remained a stalwart defender of child and maternal health and well-being in humanitarian emergencies and had contributed to efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. It had also championed young people's access to education in conflict and crisis-affected countries.

19. As the scale, complexity and gravity of humanitarian crises around the world continued to grow, particularly in situations of armed conflict, the international community must renew its commitment to political solutions and finding ways to alleviate suffering. In 2017, the United States had been the world's largest humanitarian donor, providing billions in humanitarian assistance, including $990 million in emergency funds in response to food insecurity and famine and nearly $429 million in health assistance in humanitarian contexts. In addition, it had provided financial support to global and field-level programmes to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. However, global humanitarian funding could not keep pace with the scale of need; the financing gap must be closed without relying solely on the sustained generosity of traditional donors. The United States would continue to encourage contributions from new donors and the private sector, as well as technical assistance and support for emerging donors.

20. Greater efforts were needed to promote compliance with international laws and norms. The United States drew on its influence and subject-matter expertise to press Governments and parties to conflicts to uphold obligations under international law. It had also made efforts to keep the humanitarian consequences of crises in Yemen, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the agenda of the Security Council. In that connection, she welcomed the recent adoption of Security Council resolution 2417 (2018) on hunger and armed conflict, as well as ongoing efforts to reform the humanitarian system, including through implementation of the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing. Humanitarian and development actors must work more closely together to reduce long-term need and restore the self-reliance and productivity of the countries they assisted.

21. **Mr. Kazi** (Observer for Bangladesh) said that in order to address humanitarian emergencies, better coherence and coordination was needed among Member States, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders. Sustainable development remained the most effective preventive measure for many humanitarian crises, including those related to forced displacement. The international community should therefore focus on enhancing resilience and reducing dependence on humanitarian aid.

22. Many developing countries faced financial and technological constraints that limited their ability to effectively address humanitarian challenges. The international community should develop mechanisms to provide expertise and flexible, multi-year financing. Bangladesh acknowledged the role of women as first responders in humanitarian crises and the need to further strengthen gender-responsive policies on disaster risk reduction. It was concerned at the attacks on humanitarian personnel, convoys, medical and peacekeeping personnel and civilian infrastructure and the use of starvation as a tool of war.

23. The recent exodus of the Rohingya people from Myanmar was considered the fastest-growing displacement crisis in the world. Bangladesh was currently host to over 1 million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals, 58 per cent of whom were children. The Government of Bangladesh was providing them with basic humanitarian assistance and protection and was improving their shelter in preparation for the onset of the monsoon season. To ensure the safe and sustainable return of the Rohingya to Rakhine state, the authorities in Myanmar must create a conducive

environment on the ground. Bangladesh would seek the engagement of the international community in the implementation of agreements between Bangladesh and Myanmar for the voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya.

24. **Ms. Alateibi** (United Arab Emirates) said that her country welcomed the momentum that had been seen with respect to gender and age mainstreaming. The gender and age marker and the gender policy handbook developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Post-War and Disaster Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (IASC) were powerful tools for translating norms into standard procedures. The United Arab Emirates hoped that in coming years, there would be greater linkages between gender and age scores and personal performance reviews so that there was a strong incentive for the staff of all IASC members to keep up the good work. Her Government also encouraged the development of a mandatory disability marker to identify the needs of persons with disabilities.

25. The United Arab Emirates welcomed the growing focus on anticipatory finance, including forecast-based financing, which used weather forecasts to trigger funding. Such tools had tremendous potential to save lives and reduce costs. The new request in the draft resolution for the Secretary-General to report on United Nations plans to implement such mechanisms was a strong indication of the Organization's shift towards preventive measures.

26. The United Arab Emirates supported an increase in the use of pooled funding mechanisms to foster system-wide coordination, prioritize needs and reduce competition for funds among United Nations agencies. It had seen the immediate impact of its $465 million contribution to the humanitarian response plan for Yemen under the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which had enabled the United Nations system to work cost-effectively to meet the needs of the most vulnerable while also improving and streamlining reporting. It was a blueprint for Grand Bargain implementation that put the focus on the affected population.

27. **Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan) said that, according to the report of the Secretary-General, the total number of people forcibly displaced by conflict and violence had reached a record 65 million by the end of 2016, 40 million of whom were internally displaced. That was not only a humanitarian problem but also a problem for development and a serious obstacle to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Tangible efforts must be made to tackle the root causes of displacement, manage and prevent conflicts, and protect civilian populations.

28. Azerbaijan supported efforts to increase global attention to displaced persons. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants underlined the need to develop effective strategies for preventing and reducing displacement. That document, adopted by Heads of State and Government, must help revitalize efforts to alleviate suffering.

29. Azerbaijan, which had significant numbers of internally displaced persons as a result of foreign occupation, had proven that it was entirely possible to improve the socioeconomic conditions of displaced persons without jeopardizing their secure return. Substantial financial resources had been allocated to address their needs. Accommodation for 265,000 displaced persons had been built in the previous decade, and poverty and unemployment had been significantly reduced. Such progress had been commended in a number of United Nations documents, including a report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons. Special Rapporteurs had made four official information-gathering visits to Azerbaijan in order to better understand the situation of displaced persons there.

30. **Ms. Fisher-Tsin** (Observer for Israel) said that 2018 had been a year of devastating humanitarian crises and natural disasters that had left millions of people injured or living in dire conditions. While it was not possible to control nature, the international community should prepare for natural disasters before they occurred. For many years, Israel had been at the forefront of global humanitarian response and disaster relief, and was always among the first to send emergency teams to all parts of the world. Its expertise in emergency response and collaboration with local Governments had produced results. The previous month, shortly after the lethal eruption of a volcano in Guatemala, a team of Israeli specialists, which included experts on burns and respiratory diseases, had arrived with medicine and essential equipment.

31. In 2018, the country would celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV). When it came to humanitarian emergencies, the Agency focused on the complete cycle of the various stages of each emergency and the various actors, including emergency responders and the civilian population, with the goal of helping authorities formulate a national response plan to crises. As a direct outcome of growing global threats, community resilience had become a key policy issue and a goal at the national and local levels. A community's ability to return to a business-as-usual pattern depended on its capacity to withstand, adapt to and recover from crises. Resilience went hand in hand

with capacity-building towards community development and was an important aspect of achieving long-term sustainable development.

32. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Observer for Saudi Arabia) said that the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre had developed many projects to enhance humanitarian assistance to children in armed conflict. Of particular note was its work towards the rehabilitation of child soldiers in Yemen who had been forced into battle by Houthi militias. The Government of Saudi Arabia had also contributed $1 billion to the restoration of legitimacy in Yemen and $250 million to the United Nations humanitarian response plan for that country. In order to demonstrate its commitment to alleviating the humanitarian plight of its brothers in Yemen and mitigating climate risks, Saudi Arabia had launched a comprehensive humanitarian operations plan in the governorate of Socotra for those affected by Tropical Cyclone Mekunu.

33. Saudi Arabia attached great importance to strengthening local capacities and contributing to humanitarian action. During the previous five months, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre had donated $1.7 billion dollars to more than 419 projects in 37 recipient countries. The country had also made efforts to secure a good quality of life for people at home and abroad. The Saudi Arabian Vision 2030 and National Transformation Programme and its financial balance programmes were ambitious plans aimed at contributing to humanitarian work and providing a decent standard of living for individuals, which would in turn contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

34. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Mexico) said that all stakeholders involved in the management of crises and natural disasters must comply with the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance set out in General Assembly resolution 46/182. A key lesson learned was that States needed to focus on prevention in order to avert suffering, forced displacement and the death of millions affected by crises. United Nations specialized agencies and programmes must continue to promote the optimum use of resources and to support developing countries that requested assistance, including within the context of the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, through capacity-building and balanced and sustainable support for focused programmes. Member States, United Nations agencies and programmes, civil society and other stakeholders should all work together to reduce the needs of vulnerable groups and in turn help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and sustainable peace while leaving no one behind.

35. **Mr. Nour** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that upholding human dignity, a fundamental principle of well-governed migration, was easily eroded when population movements resulted from necessity rather than choice or when livelihoods were destroyed. Migrants and displaced persons were among the most vulnerable and were often left out of planning and development initiatives. They were among the worst affected during crises, had specific vulnerabilities due to their status and were more exposed to hazards and less prepared. The International Organization for Migration therefore reaffirmed its commitment to help prevent displacement crises, and, in cases where displacement was necessary to save lives, to mitigate its impact and duration.

36. Despite the significant strides made in the area of humanitarian reform, States and the humanitarian assistance community recognized that more needed to be done. There was a consensus that responding to internal displacement was beyond the capacity of any single entity; it required a collective response that embraced a holistic, contextually flexible and multidisciplinary approach, as needs, risks and vulnerabilities reflected a combination of social, familial, structural and circumstantial factors. It was also important to recognize that migrants and displaced persons brought special skills and capacities with them and should therefore be empowered and supported to protect themselves from risk. Humanitarian assistance efforts should be need- and not mandate-driven. The increasing complexity of humanitarian policy reinforced the importance of leveraging the experience of different actors, including the private sector and civil society.

37. **Ms. Ghukasyan** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that, in addition to the conventional drivers of humanitarian emergencies, namely inter- and intra-State conflict and natural disasters, new drivers, such as unplanned urbanization and climate change, had surfaced. Those phenomena had far-reaching consequences for efforts to provide effective assistance. In future, more people would be affected by natural and man-made crises, and emerging threats would require new and smarter ways of preparing for emergencies.

38. IFRC welcomed the recommendation in the draft resolution to strengthen early-warning and early action efforts, including through innovative financing mechanisms such as forecast-based financing. Building on the experience of its National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC had established a global financing mechanism to secure predictable funding by extending the use of its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund to cover early action and prevention. IFRC worked at

the community level to help people resist further shocks and improve their daily lives. Volunteers, particularly young persons, played an essential role in the work of IFRC and the organization continued to integrate them into its decision-making and programming.

39. Empowerment of local actors had become imperative for improving the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. With the commitments made under the Grand Bargain, localization of assistance had become a priority and there had been signs of more empowered local action. In conclusion, she said that local humanitarian action should be led by local actors, and called for cooperation in creating and sustaining that culture throughout the humanitarian system.

40. **Mr. Spoerri** (Observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that his organization had developed tailored approaches to the issue of the urban displaced. Populations fleeing conflict were increasingly displaced to or within cities and faced challenges such as poor housing, limited access to services and economic insecurity. Urban internally-displaced persons were often poorer and more vulnerable than their non-displaced neighbours, having lost livelihoods, assets and social networks. Responding to urban displacement required a holistic approach that brought together municipalities, civil society, displaced persons, host communities, local businesses and donors. ICRC had led a study on urban displacement to better understand people's experiences of displacement and strengthen response. It called on States and other actors to develop better, data-driven responses to the challenges of urban displacement.

41. Responsibility for upholding the fundamental rules of war, including in counter-terrorism operations, fell to those on the front lines and to the community of States. Activities that were exclusively humanitarian must be excluded from the scope of application of criminal laws on terrorism; otherwise, the ability of neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian actions to protect those in need would be significantly impeded.

42. Its work in protracted conflicts had demonstrated to ICRC that both short- and long-term approaches to fostering resilience were needed. There was a strong potential for synergies with development systems, as humanitarians could use the systems and services that had evolved for development purposes. However, whether a nexus between humanitarian and development action could be sustained had much to do with the methods of warfare employed and the extent of human displacement and disenfranchisement of populations.

43. **Ms. Khan** (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that her organization was undergoing a profound transformation in order to deliver fast, effective and predictable responses to emergencies, but it needed better support. Progress had been made in strengthening coordination between the health and humanitarian communities. However, although initiatives such as the IASC health reactivation protocol for outbreaks, the United Nations crisis management policy and the World Bank pandemic emergency financing facility were useful systems, they were not enough in themselves. The world continued to face public health challenges, with outbreaks of diphtheria in Bangladesh, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Haiti, Indonesia and Ukraine; cholera in multiple countries in various regions; and yellow fever in Latin America and Nigeria.

44. WHO had contributed actively to systematic improvements in the humanitarian system by co-chairing the IASC task team on strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus with a focus on protracted contexts. IASC was the only coordination mechanism that allowed the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the Red Cross to shape a common understanding on humanitarian action, assess policies and ensure coherence in field support.

45. Concrete action was needed to address attacks on health-care personnel and facilities. In 2017, WHO had reported 320 such attacks in 20 countries, which had resulted in 242 deaths and 229 injured. WHO was working to end attacks through a project involving robust data collection and research on the impact of attacks on health-care delivery and health outcomes.

46. **Mr. Seymour** (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that both the Sustainable Development Goals and the World Humanitarian Summit recognized the pivotal importance of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in achieving the objective of leaving no one behind. In light of the increasingly protracted nature of crises, the new way of working, set out in the World Humanitarian Summit Commitments to Action, highlighted the need for coordination between humanitarian and development actors with a view to preventing crises and reducing humanitarian need. Humanitarian and development actors must engage in policy discussions that adequately addressed the diverse needs of women and girls within crisis-affected populations.

47. Traditional crisis-response strategies had proved inadequate. To address that problem, viable, long-term solutions were needed that upheld the rights of affected populations and maintained their dignity.

Transformative change was needed to support the self-reliance and empowerment of women and girls and allow them to build a future of their own choosing. Safeguarding the contributions of women and girls led to positive social, political and economic outcomes for their entire communities.

48. **Ms. Marcaillou** (Director, United Nations Mine Action Service) said that, in many countries, the risks posed by explosive devices such as landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices curtailed the movements of civilian populations and humanitarian aid workers. The United Nations Mine Action Service led, coordinated and implemented humanitarian responses to that vulnerability in the world's most complex conflict environments.

49. The Mine Action Service had developed gender-sensitive risk education campaigns in South Sudan to reduce the vulnerability of women navigating the explosive hazards that affected their access to water and firewood. Removing explosive hazards from homes, streets and infrastructure in cities such as Mosul allowed families to return home and re-establish their business, reducing humanitarian need. Quick and appropriate assistance to victims of explosive attacks in Afghanistan helped them recover and rebuild their lives. The Mine Action Service called on Member States to consider humanitarian mine action at the earliest stages of planning and programming humanitarian response in conflict settings.

50. In its experience of coordinating humanitarian mine action, the Service had learned many lessons. One was that the humanitarian community was best served when it was involved in the strategic planning of a humanitarian response because, often, humanitarian mine action was a prerequisite for the delivery of other humanitarian aid. It had also learned that funding for humanitarian response was most effective when resources for mine action were considered in the broader picture and allocated at the outset.

51. **The President** asked how many landmines were unexploded.

52. **Ms. Marcaillou** (Director, United Nations Mine Action Service) said that it was impossible to say how many landmines were buried in the ground, as they were counted only as they were lifted. What was clear, however, was that 64 countries around the world were currently impacted by explosive hazards and the accident rate was the highest it had been since 1999, with 8,500 casualties reported in 2017 of whom 2,000 had been killed. It therefore remained a critical problem; the Mine Action Service and its partners were doing their best to mitigate those threats.

53. **Ms. Adam** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that parties to conflicts should honour their obligation under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and the civilian infrastructure vital to children's survival and dignity. Persistent disregard for humanitarian principles and international human rights and humanitarian law, including grave violations against children, directly challenged principles of humanity. Indiscriminate tactics of war, notably in urban and densely populated civilian areas, the recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups, the detention and ill-treatment of children and the destruction of schools, hospitals and sanitation facilities all led to high numbers of child casualties.

54. UNICEF called for zero tolerance for denial of humanitarian access and attacks against humanitarian personnel. It also called for strengthened efforts to address the needs and vulnerabilities of the furthest left behind. To that end, UNICEF was committed to a systematic, strategic and programmatic approach that would accelerate results, but more predictable, flexible and unearmarked funding was needed. UNICEF had zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. With the support of Member States and other partners, it was setting up systems to prevent sexual abuse and ensure an appropriate response for victims at the field level, including community-based complaint mechanisms and assistance for victims.

Draft resolution E/2018/L.14: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

55. **The President** introduced draft resolution E/2018/L.14, which he had submitted on the basis of informal consultations.

56. **Mr. Cerutti** (Observer for Switzerland), co-facilitator, said that consultations on the draft resolution had been open and frank, which had facilitated progress in many areas. In paragraph 58, the word "Ecuador" after the word "Quito" had been removed by the editors of the text and should be reinserted, as that change had not been agreed in the room.

57. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Council) said that the editors had removed the reference to "Ecuador" in that paragraph because it was standard practice at the United Nations to refer solely to capitals without mentioning their countries. He hoped that the Council would take action on the draft resolution without adding the country name, in order to ensure consistency across draft resolutions adopted by the Council and other forums.

58. **Mr. Cerutti** (Observer for Switzerland) said that the request to reinsert "Ecuador" had already been agreed by the entire group earlier that day. There were other resolutions that mentioned the country alongside its capital. The word "Ecuador" should therefore be included.

59. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications. If he heard no objection, he took it that the Council wished to amend the draft resolution by reinserting the word "Ecuador".

60. *It was so decided.*

61. **Ms. Eckels-Currie** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of position before the decision, said that her delegation would join the consensus on the draft resolution, which should contribute to improving the international humanitarian system. The United States had long been a world leader in providing humanitarian assistance to people in need and remained a stalwart defender of maternal and children's health.

62. While progress had been made on critical issues such as education in emergencies, preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and tackling fraud in the system, the value of that forward movement quickly diminished if resolutions did not address the most pressing, high-impact issues. Some States continued to pursue policy agendas that were not conducive to international consensus. In particular, the draft resolution should more accurately address the primary drivers of humanitarian need, which were conflict and access constraints, rather than climate change or commodity prices.

63. The United States dissociated itself from consensus on the twenty-ninth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 15 and 20. It did not recognize abortion as a method of family planning, nor did it support abortion in its global health assistance. In the years since the International Conference on Population and Development, the terms "sexual and reproductive health services" and "sexual and reproductive health" had acquired connotations that ran counter to the consensus forged at the Conference and were used to promote abortion; the United States could therefore not accept their inclusion in the draft resolution. The United States would work with Member States of different regions to reach a consensus on new terminology that would better reflect common commitments regarding women's health needs. Women were whole persons with a broad range of health needs; United Nations policy should reflect that.

64. The United States was also unable to agree to the language in the twenty-ninth preambular paragraph, as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants contained numerous provisions that were inconsistent with United States immigration policy. It nonetheless remained engaged in the consultations on the draft programme of action for the global compact on refugees. The United States wished to reiterate its views as set out in previous explanations of position regarding climate change and the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework and technology transfer.

65. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.14, as orally corrected, was adopted.*

66. **Ms. Elgarf** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the resolution was a step forward for the most vulnerable groups in humanitarian emergencies, such as youth, persons with disabilities and older persons. The Group of 77 and China had put forward proposals to strengthen the ability of the United Nations to secure sustainable and predictable funding for emergency humanitarian assistance. It had also made proposals on the need for investment in social protection and agriculture in emergencies. The Group of 77 and China hoped that tangible measures would be taken to address the lack of geographical and gender balance within United Nations agencies tasked with humanitarian assistance. It had also hoped that the resolution would urge the international community to provide more financial support to national humanitarian action funds and to the Central Emergency Response Fund.

67. **Ms. Stoeva** (Observer for Bulgaria), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that conflict remained the main driver of humanitarian emergencies, but the resolution failed to express the role of conflict in human suffering. Furthermore, some States rejected the undeniable and scientifically proven exacerbation of weather-related disasters and climate change. A correct diagnosis was a precondition of adequate treatment.

68. The European Union and its member States were concerned at the regression in the discussions on sexual and reproductive health. Given that over 60 per cent of maternal deaths and approximately 45 per cent of infant deaths in 2017 had occurred in countries affected by humanitarian crises, sexual and reproductive health-care services were undoubtedly a life-saving measure. The operationalization of the Minimum Initial Service Package had a direct impact on maternal mortality and morbidity; it was regrettable that the earlier agreement on that point could not be maintained.

69. **Ms. Pritchard** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, welcomed the resolution's strengthened text on the needs of children, older person and persons with disabilities; preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse; and sexual and gender-based violence. She said that while Australia, New Zealand and Canada were pleased that the draft resolution had been adopted by consensus, they were deeply disappointed that previously agreed language on the Minimum Initial Service Package was no longer acceptable to some delegations. In accordance with the Minimum Initial Service Package and other internationally-agreed standards, access to sexual and reproductive health services was critical to the health and well-being of women and girls in humanitarian settings. Furthermore, Australia, New Zealand and Canada understood that the phrase "extremist attacks" in paragraph 30 referred to violent extremist attacks and not to extremist views.

70. **Monsignor Grysa** (Observer for the Holy See) said that there had been several improvements in the text of the resolution. His delegation welcomed the new paragraphs on providing quality education in the context of humanitarian emergencies, the stronger language on child protection, the additional language on barriers faced by persons with disabilities and the recognition of the positive role of older persons and youth. Progress had also been made on the issue of displaced persons. However, his delegation reiterated its reservations on the terms "sexual and reproductive health" and "sexual and reproductive health-care services", which it saw as applying to a holistic concept of health. The Holy See did not consider abortion, access to abortion or access to abortifacients as a dimension of those terms. In addition, the Holy See understood gender to be grounded in biological sexual identity and difference.

71. **Ms. Silva** (Uruguay) said that failure to reach a consensus on the issues that lay at the heart of the resolution, such as access to medical care and sexual and reproductive health-care services, was regrettable. The wording of the reference to the Minimum Initial Service Package that had been removed from paragraph 15 had been identical to that of the previous year's resolution adopted by the same Council members. Her delegation was concerned at the difficulties encountered in strengthening the language and substance of the resolution and at the language on access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, which was a step backward.

72. **Mr. Pronin** (Russian Federation) said that, in future, sessions should be better planned and more time should be allotted to plenary meetings as opposed to panel discussions, as that would give delegations more time to make their statements.

73. **Mr. Ajayi** (Nigeria) said that his delegation welcomed the recognition of the plight of internally displaced persons in the context of emergencies, as their issues had long been neglected in the economic and social development agenda. It hoped that action-oriented proposals would continue to be put forward. Nigeria supported the improved language on skill acquisition, vocational education and children's education in emergencies, and the links between those priorities and the urgent need for more funding.

74. The Council should avoid importing divisive language that had not been the subject of intergovernmental negotiations, as that could test members' unanimity of purpose on important humanitarian resolutions. While Nigeria accepted the reference to sexual and reproductive health-care services, it did not consider abortion and access to abortion to be included in such services. Furthermore, Nigeria understood the use of the term "gender" in the text to refer to the purely biological concept and not to the socially-constructed meaning favoured by some.

75. **Mr. Varga** (Observer for Hungary) said that the events of recent years had proved that migration posed serious security challenges. As irregular and mixed migration flows presented major difficulties for countries of origin, transit and destination, international efforts must aim at halting migration flows by prioritizing security considerations. Migration was not a basic human right. However, all persons had the right to live in peace and safety in their homelands; if that were not possible, the international community should help affected communities live a decent life as close to home as possible until they could safely return to their places of origin. Accordingly, under the Hungary Helps Initiative, his Government attempted to provide help where the problem originated rather than bringing the phenomena to countries of transit or destination. It did not support any endeavour that could encourage migration, and the wording of paragraph 32 of the resolution carried that possibility.

76. The singling out of migrants in the resolution added no value, as all persons, regardless of citizenship, must receive assistance in a humanitarian emergency situation. Migrants as a whole were made up of several subgroups, such as women, children and persons with disabilities, whose needs were addressed in the text. Humanitarian assistance in connection with migration and refugees should be confined to the discussion on the global compacts on migration and refugees. In terms of strengthening coordinated international efforts to

address the consequences of humanitarian emergencies, "assistance" and "protection" should refer to members of all vulnerable and marginalized groups or situations.

77. **Mr. Mustafa** (Sudan) said that his delegation rejected the attempts to muddy the waters through the insertion of the phrase "sexual and reproductive health-care services", which, for the Sudan, did not refer to abortion in any way whatsoever. Introducing terms that promoted abortion went against the spirit of the United Nations. As a country that was host to refugees, the Sudan would continue to work with international organizations to address the issue of migration both domestically and abroad.

Closing of the segment

78. **Mr. Lowcock** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that failure to protect civilians caught in conflict had resulted in incalculable suffering. Natural disasters affected more than 100 million people every year and tens of millions did not have enough to eat. Humanitarian workers were attacked and harassed, and safe, rapid and unimpeded access to those in need was often denied. As highlighted in the first high-level panel discussion, armed conflict stripped away the layers of protection afforded by families and society, and children faced violence, displacement and separation from family and were vulnerable to being used in hostilities. Education was the least resilient public service during conflicts, and special attention needed to be paid to education for girls and children with disabilities.

79. Although a comprehensive legal framework was in place to minimize the impact of armed conflict on children and civilians, a large gap remained between the law and the reality on the ground. It was critical to engage with all parties to armed conflict to enhance their compliance with the law.

80. While the humanitarian system had improved its ability to respond to extreme weather events and climate change, a more anticipatory approach, backed by forecast-based financing, was needed, especially to avert food crises. That had been the takeaway from the second high-level panel discussion. As emphasized in the final panel discussion, the capacities of local actors should be strengthened, and international engagement should reinforce, not replace, national and local systems.

81. It was significant that the humanitarian affairs segment had been preceded by a side event on the transition from relief to development, emphasizing the importance of overcoming silos, cementing the humanitarian-development nexus and, in general, a stronger joint focus on long-term solutions. That imperative had been illustrated by concrete examples from Somalia - which he and the UNDP Administrator had visited on a joint mission earlier in the year. Progress had been achieved on many of the commitments undertaken at the World Humanitarian Summit but more remained to be done.

82. **The President**, reviewing the panel discussions held during the segment, said that children were among the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change and conflict, and their humanitarian needs were inadequately addressed. Millions were malnourished or faced severe food insecurity, and their inability to attend school adversely affected their prospects.

83. Better solutions were needed to counter the growing impact of climate- and disaster-related crises. In 2017, the impact of natural disasters had caused the second-largest economic loss in history. Natural disasters affected over 100 million people annually and were exacerbated by climate change. Every year, livelihoods were eroded or erased by such crises. In order to better prepare for such events, the international community needed to shift from managing crises to mitigating and managing risk. New anticipatory approaches to reducing humanitarian needs were encouraging. In addition, cooperation with local communities and authorities to develop solutions based on existing local mechanisms improved the effectiveness of aid delivery processes.

84. Throughout the panel discussions, there had been a clarion call for promoting human dignity, restoring humanity, reinforcing local actors and communities and driving change through the new way of working. It was crucial that those discussions continued and were translated into concrete actions.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

United Nations E/2018/SR.41

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
11 July 2018

Original: English

2018 session
27 July 2017 to 26 July 2018
Second coordination and management meeting

Summary record of the 41st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 2 July 2018, at 10 a.m.

President: Ms. King (Vice-President) ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

Contents

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(g) Public administration and development

Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits:

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(d) Human settlements

(k) United Nations Forum on Forests

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions

(g) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(f) Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (*continued*)

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(i) Geospatial information (*continued*)

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18-10878 (E)

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8)

(g) Public administration and development

1. **Ms. Fraser-Moleketi** (Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration), speaking via video link from Johannesburg, introduced the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session (E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8).The theme of the session had been readying institutions for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Public institutions were critical to that process, yet the necessary public sector reforms remained a challenge in many countries. In that light, the Committee had agreed on a set of principles of effective governance for sustainable development and had linked them to commonly used strategies endorsed in resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It was encouraging that many experts had expressed interest in helping it to identify feasible, proven practices for implementing the strategies.

2. On the subject of institutional and policy coherence, the Committee suggested three pathways to improvement: simultaneous promotion of context-specific, inclusive coherence in both institutions and polices; structural attention and coordination using a broad range of tools, possibly accompanied by specific work programs or reforms, and a peer-to-peer learning mechanism.

3. Public fiscal management and oversight capacity remained a major challenge. The Committee recommended mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals in national finance strategies, which would make it possible to align policy priorities with actual spending and, in the least developed countries, to ensure that development did not depend on aid alone. It had also made recommendations with regard to transparent reporting as well as to misconduct and corruption, and it had considered the question of enhancing and equipping institutions in urban and rural communities to support the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

4. At its eighteenth session, the Committee proposed to consider, inter alia, the governance and public administration aspects of empowering people to build equal and inclusive societies for the twenty-first century; enhancing the capacity of the public sector in core functional areas of administration and progress on Goal 16. It would also contribute to the review of the implementation of the Goals to be conducted by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session (E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8)

5. **The President** drew attention to the draft proposals contained in chapter I, sections A and B, of the report.

Section A

Draft resolution: Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session

6. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Section B

Draft decision: Dates and provisional agenda of the eighteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

7. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits:

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (A/73/80-E/2018/58)

8. **Ms. 'Utoikamanu** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (A/73/80-E/2018/58), said that with just two years left to reach the Programme of Action goals, implementation was at a critical juncture. Growth had begun to pick up in the least developed countries, rising to almost 5 per cent in 2017. However, the trend masked very uneven results, including some weakening. The fastest growing least developed countries were those with strong public and private investment, although oil commodity exporters had shown subdued growth because of falling oil prices. Overall, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) had increased between 2011 and 2016. However, the proportion of people living on less than $1.90 per day had declined by a mere 5 per cent from 2010 to 2013 —

much too slowly to eradicate poverty by the 2020 Programme of Action deadline or even by 2030.

9. Three least developed countries had met the graduation criteria for the first time, bringing the total number to 12. That was encouraging progress but still far from the goal of enabling at least half of the countries to meet the criteria by 2020. In that connection, her Office was preparing a report on smooth transition measures and graduation support for submission to the Second Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

10. Progress in enhancing and diversifying productive capacity had been limited, with considerable variation among countries. The contribution of manufacturing value added to growth had increased by less than 2 per cent. Services accounted for almost half of growth, and agriculture for around a quarter.

11. With regard to connectivity, mobile cellular subscriptions had leapt from 42 per cent to 68 per cent. Internet coverage had risen from 5 to 16 per cent and wireless Internet access, to just over 20 per cent. Overall access to electricity had shot to 38.3 per cent in 2014. However, four countries still had levels below 10 per cent, and the access gap between urban and rural communities remained pronounced. Achieving universal access to electricity would require major investments and improved governance of public utilities.

12. Despite having tripled from 2014 to 2015, the number of patents filed remained insignificant. In that connection, the Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries had opened its offices in Gebze, Turkey, in June 2018.

13. Agriculture accounted for 60 per cent of total employment but generated only 26 per cent of value added in GDP. It was urgent to increase productivity through investment, training and access to critical inputs. In 2016, the already marginal share of exports from least developed countries had fallen to 0.89 per cent, mainly because of falling oil prices, thereby moving even further away from the 2 per cent target.

14. While school enrolment had improved somewhat, 40 per cent of all out-of-school children and adolescents were in the least developed countries. Maternal and infant mortality remained high, and in many countries, youth unemployment was alarmingly high.

15. Progress on gender equality had been uneven. However, the least developed countries were among the world's top performers in terms of parliamentary seats held by women. Furthermore, the gap between men and women living below the poverty line had closed, and girls' enrolment in education had increased.

16. The years 2015, 2016 and 2017 had been the warmest on record. Natural disasters had affected an estimated 23 million people and claimed over 1,400 lives.

17. In 2017 bilateral aid from members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development had increased by 4 per cent to $26 billion, reversing several years of decline. However, foreign direct investment flows had continued their downward trend, decreasing by 13 per cent in 2016 to $38 billion, or a mere 2 per cent of global flows. Furthermore, most of the investment was concentrated in a few mineral- and oil-extracting countries.

18. Progress had been made in certain areas of governance and capacity-building such as planning processes, inter-ministerial coordination and engagement of diverse stakeholders, as well as on implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

19. All stakeholders needed to make major efforts to implement the Programme of Action in the remaining two and a half years. Least developed countries should focus on building an enabling environment for the private sector, and their development partners should meet their commitments, including with respect to official development assistance and trade preferences. Continued support for the Technology Bank was essential, and graduating and graduated countries needed stronger support. Member States were invited to consider holding a fifth United Nations conference on the least developed countries to assess the implementation of the Programme of Action and decide on subsequent action.

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(d) Human settlements (A/73/83-E/2018/62)

(k) United Nations Forum on Forests (E/2018/42-E/CN.18/2018/9)

20. **Mr. Decorte** (Officer-in-Charge of the New York Liaison Office of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (A/73/83-E/2018/62), said that since the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in 2016, challenges such as inequality, exclusion and segregation had intensified. Disadvantages continued to concentrate in specific

places and for specific people. Violence and forced migration were on the rise. Housing remained largely unaffordable, and development was consuming more land than necessary. Nevertheless, many cities remained places of innovation, social change and prosperity.

21. The report was the first in a series of five quadrennial reports to be presented to the General Assembly and complemented the Sustainable Development Goal 11 Synthesis Report. It provided suggestions for improving the reporting system, which should remain country-led and should build on the current work of United Nations agencies and development partners while integrating the actions of a wide range of stakeholders. It also made recommendations for implementing the New Urban Agenda.

22. Sustainable urbanization would contribute greatly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. However, it would require increased investments in urban monitoring and accelerated adjustment of policies and actions. UN-Habitat intended to be accountable and effective in fulfilling its focal point role.

23. **Mr. Yaakob** (Malaysia), Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests, introducing the report of the Forum on its thirteenth session (E/2018/42-E/CN.18/2018/9), said that it had been the first policy session since the adoption of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. In accordance with its quadrennial programme of work, the Forum had considered, inter alia, implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests; monitoring, assessment and reporting, and means of implementation. Under the agenda item on implementation, a ministerial round table had been held on forest-based solutions for accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The key messages that had emerged were contained in the Chair's summary in annex I of the report.

24. In its resolution 13/1, the Forum welcomed the announcement of several initial voluntary contributions and adopted a communication and outreach strategy for implementing the strategic plan. It welcomed the Collaborative Partnership on Forests workplan 2017–2020 as well as a joint workplan developed by major groups to accelerate achievement of the global forest goals. It adopted the format for initial voluntary national reporting and requested the Forum secretariat to prepare a flagship publication on progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets for release by the end of 2021. It welcomed the progress made in developing a core set of forest-related indicators. It adopted guidelines for the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network, requested the secretariat to initiate development of an online Network clearing house mechanism and welcomed the offer of the Government of China to establish a Network office in Beijing. In connection with the ongoing reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, it stressed the importance of maintaining the ability of the Forum and the subprogramme on sustainable forest management to fulfil the Forum's mandate.

Draft decision: Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its thirteenth session and provisional agenda for its fourteenth session

25. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decision entitled "Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its thirteenth session and provisional agenda for its fourteenth session", contained in chapter I, section A, of the report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its thirteenth session (E/2018/42-E/CN.18/2018/9).

26. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions

(g) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (E/2018/43-E/C.19/2018/11)

27. **Ms. Aboubakrine** (Mali), Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, introducing the report of the Permanent Forum on its seventeenth session (E/2018/43-E/C.19/2018/11), said that the theme had been indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories and resources. On a positive note, some States had recognized those rights, and it was becoming increasingly clear that ensuring them contributed to addressing climate change and environmental degradation. In addition, regional mechanisms in Africa and Asia had issued decisions setting standards in that area.

28. However, there was a wide gap between formal recognition and actual implementation. Land or resources mapping, demarcation and titling were often delayed, shelved or left unfinished, and contradictory laws denied formally recognized rights. The majority of States had not officially recognized the indigenous peoples, let alone their rights to lands, territories and resources, and the Permanent Forum urged them to incorporate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into national legislation, policies and programmes.

29. The Forum had heard a number of accounts of forced dispossession of indigenous peoples for development, business or conservation purposes.

Disproportionate numbers of indigenous leaders and human rights defenders were victims of intimidation and reprisal. Despite consistent evidence that ensuring indigenous peoples' right to their lands, territories and resources protected biodiversity and the integrity of ecosystems, conservation efforts could have a grave impact, and the Forum was therefore asking the Council to authorize an international expert group meeting on that issue.

30. With regard to the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the Forum appreciated the efforts of several States to develop national action plans in consultation with indigenous peoples and encouraged others to do likewise. It had stressed the need for more ambitious goals for the consultations on enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations, and it had encouraged the United Nations country teams to facilitate dialogue between indigenous peoples and Member States to support implementation of the system-wide action plan on the rights of indigenous peoples.

31. With respect to the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, the Permanent Forum had welcomed the related action plan and had called on the States to support its implementation. In its deliberations on women, youth and children, it had recommended that the Commission on the Status of Women should organize a high-level interactive dialogue on the rights of indigenous women in 2020.

32. Regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, the Forum had emphasized that they could not be achieved without fulfilling the rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources and had called on States to include the recognition of those rights under Goal 2. It had also reiterated the need to include indigenous peoples in the voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and it encouraged States to work with indigenous peoples to develop guidelines for responsible renewable energy development in the context of Goal 7.

33. At the 2018 session, the Forum had adopted a new method of work, devoting the first week to plenary meetings and the second to regional dialogues with indigenous peoples and Member States. The new format had been well received and would be continued at the 2019 session. The Forum had also continued the practice of holding closed dialogue meetings with the Member States, indigenous peoples and United Nations agencies.

34. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decisions contained in chapter I, section A, of the report.

Draft decision I: International expert group meeting on the theme "Conservation and the rights of indigenous peoples"

Draft decision II: Venue and dates for the eighteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Draft decision III: Report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its seventeenth session and provisional agenda for its eighteenth session

35. *Draft decisions I, II and III were adopted.*

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(f) Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (*continued*) (E/2018/L.16)

Draft resolution E/2018/L.16: United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

36. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

37. **Mr. Varganov** (Russian Federation), introducing draft resolution E/2018/L.16, said that the Russian Federation continued to give priority to the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. Thanks to efforts in 2017, the Task Force should have a comprehensive report with recommendations for future action in time for the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

38. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Council) announced that Belarus, Belgium, France, Hungary, Japan, Poland, Thailand and Uruguay had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

39. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.16 was adopted.*

40. **Ms. González** (Uruguay), emphasizing the importance of closer coordination among the United Nations agencies participating in the Task Force, said that it should expand its efforts in the legislative and regulatory field, where it could develop model laws for controlling the risk factors for non-communicable diseases, for example. It should also provide advice on grappling with interference from industry. In addition, the Task Force could contribute to capacity-building by promoting the exchange of experiences and best practices.

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(i) Geospatial information (*continued*) (E/2018/L.15)

Draft resolution E/2018/L.15: Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disaster

41. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

42. **Ms. Azucena** (Philippines), introducing draft resolution E/2018/L.15 on behalf of Jamaica and her own delegation, said that the draft resolution endorsed the Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters and drew on the principles of the Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the 2030 Agenda and General Assembly resolution 69/243 on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development. It was intended to guide stakeholders and partners in the management of geospatial information and services in all phases of disaster risk management. It presented five priorities for action and invited Member States, the United Nations system, international organizations, donors, the private sector, academia and non-governmental organizations to adopt the Strategic Framework in accordance with their mandates.

43. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Council) announced that Ireland, the Netherlands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Thailand and Vietnam had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

44. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.15 was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations E/2018/SR.42

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
25 July 2018

Original: English

2018 session
27 July 2017–26 July 2018
Third coordination and management meeting

Summary record of the 42nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 2 July 2018, at 3 p.m.

President: Ms. King (Vice-President) . . . . . (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

Contents

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions (continued)

(c) Crime prevention and criminal justice

(d) Narcotic drugs

Interactive round table on the contribution of functional commissions to the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development: Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

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18-10896 (E)

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions (*continued*)

(c) Crime prevention and criminal justice (E/2017/30/Add.1 and E/2018/30)

1. **Mr. Bouchaara** (Morocco), Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, introduced the report of the Commission on its reconvened twenty-sixth session (E/2017/30/Add.1) and the report of the Commission on its twenty-seventh session (E/2018/30).

2. Accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, he said that cross-border transactions and human movement were common, and information flow had become borderless. As a result, crime had also become a cross-border phenomenon, particularly terrorism, human trafficking, migrant smuggling and wildlife crime. The joint actions of Member States to address those cross-border challenges through strengthening international cooperation and technical assistance had received growing attention in the Commission, which functioned as a policymaking body that provided guidance through policy deliberation and the adoption of resolutions and decisions.

3. The theme of the twenty-seventh session had been "Criminal justice responses to prevent and counter cybercrime in all its forms, including through the strengthening of cooperation at the national and international levels". A number of standing items had also been discussed, including the use and application of United Nations standards and norms, as well as world crime trends and emerging issues and responses. A record 1,200 participants had attended the session, and there had been 15 exhibitions and over 80 side events, in which Member States and other stakeholders had presented their work and exchanged views, lessons learned and good practices. Nine resolutions and three decisions had been adopted. Four of the resolutions dealt with trafficking, specifically, preventing and combating trafficking in persons facilitated by the criminal misuse of information and communications technologies (ICTs); improving the protection of children against trafficking in persons, including by addressing the criminal misuse of ICTs; strengthening measures against trafficking in persons; and promoting international cooperation against trafficking in cultural property. A resolution on restorative justice in criminal matters had also been adopted.

4. Three draft resolutions had been recommended for approval by the Council and subsequent adoption by the General Assembly. The first concerned enhancing the role of the Commission in contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and had been sponsored by a number of Member States across regional groups. In that connection, the Commission submitted a substantive written contribution to the high-level political forum on sustainable development each year. The second resolution dealt with the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. The third resolution concerned preparations for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to be held in April 2020, in Kyoto, Japan. The theme would be "Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: Towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda", and workshops would focus on evidence-based crime prevention, reducing reoffending, the role of education and youth engagement and emerging solutions. Japan had announced its intention to hold a youth forum prior to the Congress.

5. In addition, a new database on the website of the Commission made it easier to search for resolutions adopted at previous sessions.

6. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that Mexico had played an active role as a State member of the Council, sponsoring a number of resolutions on issues such as improving the quality and availability of crime and criminal justice statistics and mainstreaming a gender perspective into crime prevention and criminal justice policies and programmes and into efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime.

7. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) played a fundamental role in providing technical assistance and building capacity. The international community must therefore ensure that the Office had the necessary sustainable resources to carry out its work. It must also promote synergies and collaboration between UNODC and other United Nations agencies in order to offer countries more effective and comprehensive cooperation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to avoid duplicating efforts and wasting resources.

8. His Government emphasized the importance of distinguishing between terrorism, violent extremism conducive to terrorism, transnational organized crime and the world drug problem, recognizing that each required a distinct approach. The international community must increase awareness of elements that

fuelled criminal and terrorist organizations, especially trafficking in firearms and illicit financial flows, and address the structural factors that increased the capacity of those organizations and their impact on international peace and security. Progress must therefore be made in achieving Goal 16.

9. With regard to budgeting and operations, Mexico called on UNODC to redouble its efforts to achieve gender parity in all positions as well as equitable geographical representation, which continued to be a challenge for the Office.

Draft decision: Report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its reconvened twenty-sixth session

10. **The President** drew attention to the draft decision contained in chapter I, section A, of the report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its reconvened twenty-sixth session (E/2017/30/Add.1).

11. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its twenty-seventh session (E/2018/30)

12. **The President** drew attention to the draft proposals contained in chapter I, sections A and B, of the report.

Section A

Draft resolution I: Enhancing the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Draft resolution II: Follow-up to the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

13. *Draft resolutions I and II were adopted.*

14. **Mr. Mizuno** (Japan) said that the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was the largest and most prominent meeting in that field within the United Nations. Substantive discussions would begin in regional preparatory meetings in early 2019, and he called for the active involvement of Member States in order to improve synergies and cohesion between the Congress and other United Nations bodies.

Draft resolution III: The rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals

15. *Draft resolution III was adopted.*

Section B

Draft decision I: Appointment of one member of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

Draft decision II: Report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its twenty-seventh session and provisional agenda for its twenty-eighth session

16. *Draft decisions I and II were adopted.*

(d) Narcotic drugs (E/2017/28/Add.1, E/2018/28 and E/INCB/2017/1)

17. **Ms. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico), Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, introduced the report of the Commission on its reconvened sixtieth session (E/2017/28/Add.1) and the report of the Commission on its sixty-first session (E/2018/28).

18. Accompanying her statement with a digital slide presentation, she said that the drug problem could only be addressed with a comprehensive and balanced approach, through multilateralism, cooperation, dialogue and mutual understanding. As Chair of the Commission, she would continue to support efforts to ensure consistency and generate synergies within the United Nations system and harmonize its work within the Commission in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. She invited all countries that did not have permanent representation in Vienna or were not currently States members of the Commission to share their proposals with her. She also extended that invitation to civil society organizations, academia and regional forums.

19. The sixty-first session of the Commission had been attended by nearly 1,700 participants and had comprised approximately 100 side events and exhibitions. The President of the International Narcotics Control Board, the Executive Director of UNODC and the Director General of the World Health Organization had issued a joint statement in which their organizations committed to further strengthening cooperation. The Commission had recommended two draft decisions for adoption by the Council and had adopted 11 resolutions and 12 decisions. It had discussed changes in the scope of control of substances under the international drug control conventions. Carfentanil had been included in Schedules I and IV of the Single Convention on Narcotic

Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol. Five additional substances had been included in Schedule I and six substances had been included in Schedule II of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. The resolutions adopted by the Commission covered a broad range of issues, including drug prevention curricula in educational settings, the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, the importance of research and analytical work in implementing scheduling decisions, the promotion of alternative development and non-stigmatizing attitudes, the need to address social marginalization and protect children, and the importance of a coordinated and joint approach to the world drug problem.

20. Resolution 61/10 concerned preparations for the two-day ministerial segment, to be held during the sixty-second session of the Commission in March 2019, in order to evaluate the implementation of commitments set out in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. It would consist of a general debate and two interactive multi-stakeholder round tables. The resolution encouraged all member States, observer States and observers to be represented at the highest possible level and to participate actively in the preparations in order to foster an in-depth exchange of information. An outline for the way beyond 2019 would be presented at the reconvened sixty-first session of the Commission, and three intersessional meetings would be held in 2018 to advance substantive and organizational preparations for the 2019 ministerial segment.

21. The implementation of the outcome document of the special session was led by the Commission and supported by UNODC, in close cooperation with all relevant United Nations entities. The follow-up process consisted of thematic discussions conducted by the Commission, support for implementation at the regional level facilitated by subsidiary bodies of the Commission, implementation workshops at the national level and a post-special session website with a good practices portal.

22. The Commission had also submitted a substantive contribution to the high-level political forum.

23. **Mr. Sumyai** (President of the International Narcotics Control Board), introducing the report of the Board for 2017 as contained in document E/INCB/2017/1, said that the report had focused on the link between human rights and drug policy. The Board worked with Governments to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes, to provide treatment and rehabilitation services, as well as to prevent diversion, drug abuse, illicit cultivation, production and trafficking.

24. The treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of people impacted by drug use disorders were essential to drug demand reduction. Five out of six people in need of drug dependence treatment lacked access to related services. The report therefore drew attention to the need to protect their right to health and provided recommendations to Governments to address stigma, which remained a significant obstacle to accessing treatment. The treatment of drug dependence was highly cost-effective.

25. The report also reviewed the functioning of the international drug control system and treaty compliance. The use of cannabis for non-medical purposes was contrary to the international drug control conventions, and the Board was continuing its dialogue with the Governments of Uruguay, the United States of America and Canada in that connection. The principle of shared responsibility and the fact that treaties were binding and must be implemented in good faith formed the cornerstone of the rule-based international order. The Board would therefore continue to call for universal compliance, as piecemeal implementation of the conventions was not an option. Furthermore, drug control treaties must be implemented with full respect for human rights. Internationally controlled drugs must be available and accessible for medical use, and Governments must comply with their obligations to prevent drug abuse and ensure early identification, treatment, education, aftercare, rehabilitation and social reintegration. Access to those services must be non-discriminatory and available in prison settings, and children must be protected from drug abuse, illicit production and trafficking. In addition, the Board once again urged the international community to prioritize its support for Afghanistan in the face of its worsening security and drug control situation.

26. While the global medical consumption of opioid analgesics had been increasing, a global pain divide had emerged which disproportionately impacted low- and middle-income countries. He called on all States to quickly close that gap, ensure rational prescribing practices and prevent diversion and risk of abuse. There was also an urgent need to continue to address the overdose epidemic in North America. The Board encouraged Governments to work with public health officials, pharmacists, pharmaceutical companies, physicians, consumer protection associations and law enforcement. It suggested regulating the industry and its advertising and raising awareness about the risks of inappropriate prescription practices and misuse through

public education. While the therapeutic use of cannabinoids was permissible under the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, Governments should examine the results of scientific studies and ensure that prescribing was performed with competent medical knowledge and supervision, based on the best available scientific evidence and in consideration of potential health risks.

27. To support the implementation of the outcome document of the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, the Board had developed a new electronic platform to facilitate international trade in controlled substances. Through its Learning project, it was working to enhance the capacity of national authorities to better estimate their requirements for medicines. The Board also worked to counteract new psychoactive substances through Project Ion and its communication platform, as well as the Paris Pact initiative. The Operational Partnerships to Interdict Opioids' Illicit Distribution and Sales Project had been launched to support national and international efforts to prevent synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, from reaching markets. Those initiatives required the full engagement, participation and political and financial support of States.

28. The report also analysed the world drug situation and highlighted developments at the regional level, drawing attention to the fact that Oceania remained the region with the lowest rate of accession to the drug control treaties. He urged Member States to support and implement the measures recommended in the report.

29. The 2017 Precursors Report (E/INCB/2017/4) detailed the latest trends and developments in legitimate international trade and trafficking in precursors and provided an overview of the actions taken by Governments and the Board to deny traffickers access to the chemicals needed for illicit drug manufacture. It also focused on online trade in precursors and related challenges, including the increasingly sophisticated attempts of traffickers to obtain chemicals. With regard to scheduling, the Board made recommendations to identify, disrupt and dismantle organized criminal groups involved in trafficking precursors.

30. Ongoing dialogue with Governments was crucial to monitoring and facilitating the implementation of the drug control conventions, with the ultimate objective of promoting and safeguarding health and welfare. The Board counted on continued cooperation from States in reporting and in accepting country missions.

31. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that his Government was committed to addressing the world drug problem and attached great importance to multilateral bodies and mechanisms to implement related international agreements. Mexico would continue to take a holistic and comprehensive approach to promoting concrete actions to implement the recommendations from the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem in international forums and regional mechanisms.

32. His Government placed particular importance on the participation of civil society, United Nations entities and other international organizations in the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Mexico would continue to promote international strategies that focused on well-being and placed the individual at the centre of drug policies.

33. **Ms. Mukhametzyanova** (Russian Federation) said that she wished to draw attention to the recent adoption of a bill legalizing marijuana in Canada, which her Government regarded as a flagrant violation of that country's international legal obligations under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. The International Narcotics Control Board had repeatedly emphasized that the production of narcotics was allowed only for medical and scientific purposes, without exception. The three international drug control conventions must remain the cornerstone of the international drug control system, as clearly set forth in the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, which had been supported by Canada. Her delegation hoped that such an unacceptable step taken by Canada would not go unnoticed by other members of the international community who understood the importance of a responsible, comprehensive and non-selective implementation of United Nations conventions by all participants. Her Government expressed its full support for the principled position taken by the Board in the implementation of its mandate.

34. With regard to the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its sixty-first session (E/2018/28), she wished to draw attention to paragraph 194, which referenced a statement made by the Russian Federation on behalf of a number of States to express their reservations regarding the text of resolution 61/10 on preparations for the ministerial segment, to be held during the sixty-second session of the Commission, in 2019.

35. **Ms. Turner** (Observer for Jamaica) said that her Government had been pleased to participate in the sixty-

first session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and was encouraged by the willingness and efforts of the Chair to continue to engage with countries, like Jamaica, that were not yet a State member of the Commission and did not have permanent representation in Vienna. Her Government reaffirmed its commitment to its obligations under the three international drug control treaties and other applicable international law and would continue to make efforts to address the illicit cultivation, manufacturing and trafficking of narcotic drugs and other controlled substances.

36. With regard to the statement by the President of International Narcotics Control Board, her Government was considering the proposal to host a mission to Jamaica in 2018. She reiterated the need for a comprehensive and balanced approach to addressing the world drug problem and for synergistic cooperation within the United Nations and among Member States.

Draft decision: Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its reconvened sixtieth session

37. **The President** drew attention to the draft decision contained in chapter I, section A, of the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its reconvened sixtieth session (E/2017/28/Add.1).

38. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its sixty-first session (E/2018/28)

39. **The President** drew attention to the draft proposals contained in chapter I, sections A and B, of the report.

Section A

Draft decision I: Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its sixty-first session and provisional agenda for its sixty-second session

Draft decision II: Report of the International Narcotics Control Board

40. *Draft decisions I and II were adopted.*

Interactive round table on the contribution of functional commissions to the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development: Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

41. **The President** said that the round table provided a platform where key issues, gains, achievements and challenges that had been discussed in depth by functional commissions could be synthesized in order to discern common trends. It would allow the commissions to demonstrate how their most recent work made a substantive contribution to the high-level political forum, specifically, to one or several of the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2018, which included Goal 6 on water and sanitation, Goal 7 on energy, Goal 11 on cities and human settlements, Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production patterns and Goal 15 on life on land. The round table would also explore how the commissions were addressing cross-cutting issues, such as partnerships under Goal 17, and gender mainstreaming to strengthen the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. She also wished to hear more about the increased collaboration, interaction and information exchange among the commissions.

42. **Ms. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico), Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, said that the world drug problem was intertwined with a vast array of social, economic and environmental issues. In 2009, Member States had noted that vulnerabilities undermining human development, including poverty and social marginalization, should also be taken into consideration in national interventions to counter the world drug problem. The principal of ensuring that no one was left behind was a prerequisite to sustainable and resilient societies, and the need to incorporate provisions for vulnerable members of society in all aspects of addressing drug-related socioeconomic issues had been widely recognized.

43. In the outcome document of the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, for which the Commission acted as a follow-up body, Member States had highlighted that efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and address the world drug problem were complementary and mutually reinforcing. With regard to Goal 3 on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages, drug use had a significant impact on public health. Drug production and trafficking had direct consequences on Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. Furthermore, the relationship between economic development and drugs could be seen in rural areas, where poverty and a lack of sustainable livelihoods were risk factors that could lead farmers to engage in illicit cultivation. In a recent resolution of the Commission, member States had underlined the need for long-term and flexible funding for the implementation of comprehensive and balanced development-oriented drug control programmes and viable economic alternatives, in particular alternative development.

44. In the outcome document of the special session, Member States had committed to ensuring that measures to eradicate and prevent the illicit cultivation of plants took due account of the protection of the environment, which could support the achievement of Goal 6 on the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all and Goal 15 on protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. Clandestine laboratories that processed drugs required precursors and other chemicals, many of which were hazardous to human health and damaging to the environment, and unused chemicals were often disposed of in sewage systems, rivers and forests. Furthermore, alternative development initiatives must be environmentally friendly to ensure that they did not cause deforestation or other environmental damage.

45. With regard to Goal 11 on inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities, the *World Drug Report* of 2012 had addressed the linkages between urbanization and drug control. The outcome document of the special session highlighted the importance of providing access to regular sports and cultural activities for children and youth, with a view to promoting healthy lives and lifestyles through the recovery and improvement of public spaces. Targeted prevention measures strengthened resilience among children and youth and supported international efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Viable economic alternatives must also be provided in urban areas. The Commission encouraged the consideration of development-oriented interventions, including through job opportunities, improved infrastructure and basic public services. Prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation and social integration measures for people who used drugs, when based on scientific evidence, reduced drug use and its impact on public health, which was essential to the well-being of societies. The Commission had adopted a resolution to promote non-stigmatizing attitudes in health care and called on Member States to ensure non-discriminatory access to health care and social services for vulnerable members of society within the framework of comprehensive demand reduction strategies.

46. **Mr. Yaakob** (Observer for Malaysia), Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests, said that the thirteenth session of the Forum had featured a ministerial round table and an interactive plenary discussion on the contribution of forests to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It had identified lessons learned, challenges, emerging issues and forest-based solutions for accelerating achievements, particularly with regard to Goal 6 on water and sanitation, Goal 7 on energy, Goal 11 on human settlements, Goal 12 on production and consumption and Goal 17 on partnerships, in addition to Goal 15 on life on land, which included sustainably managing forests. The key messages from those discussions had been that forests were crucial for food, water, wood, energy, biodiversity, health and climate change; the Goals could only be achieved if forests were sustainably managed and forest landscapes were restored; and halting deforestation and restoring degraded forests by 2020, under Goal 15.2, required urgent action. While the necessary best practices and tools were available, their application must be upscaled, and progress must be accelerated.

47. Fragmentation in global forest governance remained a challenge. Enhanced synergies were needed across the United Nations system and beyond the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and achieving its global forest goals and targets would accelerate the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals.

48. A summary of the session had been submitted to the 2018 high-level political forum. In addition, a one-day event entitled "Forest-based transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies: lessons learned and success stories" would be held in July 2018, with a view to stimulating partnerships and synergies among stakeholders to achieve Goal 15 and other Goals under review by the high-level political forum.

49. **Ms. Grignon** (Observer for Kenya), Vice-Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, said that, during the sixty-second session of the Commission, it had become clear that policymaking as usual was no longer sufficient to address the challenges faced by women and girls living in rural areas. In order to create sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies, in which those furthest behind were reached first, the international community needed to employ a more targeted approach that closed gaps, responded to their needs and facilitated the realization of their rights.

50. During the session, a robust agreement had been reached, which clearly outlined the targeted approaches necessary to reach all rural women and girls and end all forms of discrimination and violence against them. The agreed conclusions reviewed the situation of rural women and girls in relation to Goal 5 and its targets on gender equality and empowerment, as well as other Goals that would be the focus of the high-level political forum. Discussions had also focused on eradicating poverty, ending hunger, improving nutrition and food security and providing improved agricultural solutions

for rural women and girls. In that connection, the adverse impacts of climate change and concerns regarding deforestation and desertification had also received special attention. Additional issues discussed had included infrastructure; water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; transportation; human settlements in rural areas; women's equal access to productive resources; land tenure security; access to, ownership of and control over land, forests and water; and the urgent need to reduce the time spent by women and girls collecting fuel and household water. The session had provided Governments and stakeholders with a road map to realize the rights of rural women and girls. Strengthened normative, legal and policy frameworks and other enablers would facilitate the implementation of economic and social policies for the empowerment of women and girls and ensure their participation, agency, voice and leadership.

51. **Mr. Bouchaara** (Morocco), Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, said that the Commission had a standing agenda item under which it discussed follow-up to and review and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It was working on a number of issues that were relevant to the 2018 high-level political forum, including the needs of migrants and victims of trafficking in persons, the specific needs of children and youth, violence against women and girls, the treatment of prisoners and the promotion of the rule of law, as well as responses to cybercrime, terrorism and urban crime.

52. While the work of the Commission was most directly connected to Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies, it was also related to several other Goals, including Goal 4 on quality education, Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 10 on reducing inequality. With regard to Goal 11 on the creation of safe, inclusive and resilient cities, the Commission had contributed to the development of effective and humane urban crime prevention strategies, including through its work on standards and norms. In the outcome document of the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, for which the Commission acted as an implementing body, Member States had agreed to further address the links between urban crime and other manifestations of organized crime, including crimes committed by gangs, and had committed to exchanging experiences in effective crime prevention and criminal justice programmes and policies in order to address the impact of urban crime and gang-related violence through innovative approaches and foster social inclusion and reintegration of adolescents and young adults. With regard to Goal 15 on life on land, the Commission worked to combat trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora. In the outcome document of the Congress, Member States had committed to adopting effective measures to prevent and counter crimes that impacted the environment, including trafficking in wildlife, timber and timber products and hazardous waste, as well as poaching. He looked forward to deepened dialogue and cooperation with participants so that the international community could meet expectations and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

53. **Mr. Major** (Observer for Hungary), Vice-Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, said that the twenty-first session of the Commission had focused on two priority themes. The first theme was directly linked to Goal 7 and focused on the role of science, technology and innovation in increasing the share of renewable energy by 2030. The Commission had reviewed the latest trends in the use of renewable energy technologies and had identified barriers and drivers for deployment. It had examined the potential opportunities afforded by new and emerging technologies and had explored how policymakers could shape renewable energy markets and policies by balancing international competition and cooperation, innovation, change and technologies. The Commission had also discussed the technical challenges of integrating renewable energy to electricity grids and the advantages and disadvantages of policy instruments such as feed-in tariffs and auctions in electricity markets. In order to increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix, Governments should increase support for research and development in related technologies, adopt policies that supported innovation and deployment, enable the contribution of grid and off-grid solutions and support new business and financing models to ensure affordability. Renewable energy policies should therefore be incorporated in national development strategies, and policy coordination and coherence with sectoral policies relating to science, technology and innovation must be improved.

54. The second priority theme, building digital competencies to benefit from new and existing technologies with a focus on gender and youth, was an area in which the international community had failed. Since 1990, the gender gap had increased substantially, especially in digital technologies, despite all efforts, rhetoric and proposed policies, and everyone within the United Nations system must work to determine the cause. The importance of digital skills was well known, and it was clear that all countries were lagging behind. For example, 46 per cent of the workforce was lacking the necessary digital skills across the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries. In

that connection, the recent session of the Commission had provided a platform for sharing good practices, in which a number of countries had participated. Furthermore, the participation of women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics should be increased.

55. The Commission had also held a ministerial round table on the role of science, technology and innovation in supporting sustainable and resilient societies and had created a space to facilitate international cooperation in which Member States could share their experiences, explore opportunities for learning and build partnerships.

56. **Mr. Santaella** (Mexico), Vice-Chair of the Statistical Commission, speaking via video link from Mexico City, said that the Commission had been developing instruments to monitor the 2030 Agenda, in collaboration with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In March 2015, the Commission had established the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators to develop a global indicator framework, which had been adopted by the General Assembly in 2017. During its last session of 2017, the Commission had agreed on some important refinements to the list of 232 indicators and had discussed the status of those for which the methodology was not yet fully developed. Given that countries had already begun to establish national reporting platforms and tended to use the global indicator framework as a guide, further development of those indicators was crucial.

57. At its most recent session, the Commission had reviewed the draft guidelines on data flows and global data reporting for the Goals, which was an initial step to improve coordination and harmonization of national and international data systems and to ensure full transparency of data, metadata and data aggregates presented in the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators database. Further work would be necessary to establish a fruitful dialogue between all parties and to prepare criteria for implementing the guidelines that were based on best practices and would limit the potential burden in terms of time and resources for both national and international statistical systems. It would not be possible to review progress on the Sustainable Development Goals or fully implement the 2030 Agenda without quality, timely, reliable, open and disaggregated data. The Commission had therefore prioritized capacity development, including statistical training, and had established the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training.

58. Household surveys were an important source of data for monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in countries where administrative data sources and civil registration systems were not fully functional. Through its Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, the Commission was working to provide countries with the necessary tools and guidelines to conduct those surveys. The Working Group had mapped Goal indicators that could be derived from household surveys and would continue to identify existing gaps in that regard. It would also update the existing methodological guidance on household surveys with a cross-cutting focus, particularly with regard to sampling, disaggregation and multimode data collection.

59. **The President** said that Goal 17 on partnerships was included in every review conducted by the high-level political forum, and input from functional commissions strengthened the integrated nature of the Goals. In addition, the 2030 Agenda emphasized the paramount importance of systematically mainstreaming a gender perspective in its implementation. She wished to know which cross-cutting issues were addressed by the commissions and how their work contributed to an integrated approach to the Sustainable Development Goals. She also wondered how the commissions mainstreamed gender perspectives and encouraged partnerships.

60. **Mr. Santaella** (Mexico), Vice-Chair of the Statistical Commission, speaking via video link from Mexico City, said that, through the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, the Commission was working to determine the dimensions for data disaggregation necessary to ensure that no one was left behind. In order to address cross-cutting issues, the Commission had established the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, which had presented the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data at the first United Nations World Data Forum, in South Africa in 2017. The Plan had defined six strategic areas of action: coordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development, innovation and modernization of national statistical systems, strengthening of basic statistical activities and programmes, dissemination and use of sustainable development data, multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data, and resource mobilization and coordinated efforts for statistical capacity-building. The second United Nations World Data Forum would take place in October 2018 in Dubai to facilitate dialogue between the various

communities of users and producers of statistics for the implementation of the Global Action Plan.

61. With regard to gender, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics served as an advisory and coordinating mechanism for the Global Gender Statistics Programme, and a number of critical gender issues had been integrated throughout the global indicator framework. Approximately one third of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators were gender relevant, including those on poverty, health, education, work, violence against women and political decision-making. National statistical offices faced challenges in monitoring Goal indicators, particularly with regard to producing data that properly reflected gender issues. The Commission therefore reviewed and provided guidance on methodologies to integrate a gender dimension into all areas of official statistics, including on emerging issues such as unpaid work, asset ownership and entrepreneurship. It also promoted statistical capacity-building so that countries could regularly produce statistics that responded to their national gender data needs. Collaboration with countries was essential to ensuring that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were reflected in all aspects of economic and social well-being.

62. **Ms. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico), Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, said that ensuring a gender-perspective approach had become a key issue in addressing the world drug problem. According to the 2018 *World Drug Report*, the negative impact of drug use had increased more rapidly among women than men. The Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem contained commitments to ensure that drug control policies, measures and interventions took into account the specific needs and circumstances of women. Furthermore, in the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, Member States had highlighted that a truly balanced approach to international drug control efforts must incorporate a gender-responsive approach, and a chapter had been devoted to operational recommendations on cross-cutting issues. Member States were also encouraged to mainstream a gender perspective and ensure the involvement of women in all stages of development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of drug policies and programmes.

63. The Commission had encouraged Member States to take into account the specific needs of women in the prevention, detection and treatment of drug dependence, had addressed the involvement of women and girls in drug trafficking and had adopted a resolution on mainstreaming a gender perspective in drug-related policies and programmes. During its most recent session, the Commission had adopted a resolution on promoting measures for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, Hepatitis B and C and Syphilis.

64. With regard to partnerships, the Commission highly valued the contributions of United Nations entities and specialized agencies, regional organizations, academia and civil society. In its preparations for and follow-up to the special session, the Commission had sought opportunities to benefit from the experiences, lessons learned and good practices of all stakeholders. In addition, the most recent session of the Commission had included an agenda item on inter-agency cooperation and coordination. As requested by the Secretary-General, UNODC was coordinating efforts among relevant United Nations entities to assist Member States in implementing the outcome document of the special session. Special attention was also given to cooperation with other intergovernmental bodies, particularly the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Statistical Commission.

65. **Mr. Major** (Observer for Hungary), Vice-Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, said that efforts in science, technology and innovation directly contributed to achieving a number of Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure. For example, artificial intelligence, especially when combined with robotics, transformed production and business. Three-dimensional printing allowed for faster and cheaper low-volume production and rapid iterative prototyping. Biotechnology enabled gene editing, which allowed for personalized treatments and genetic modifications of plants and animals, potentially revolutionizing agriculture and the management of epidemics. Nanotechnology was used in water purification, battery storage, the precise management of agrochemicals and the delivery of medication.

66. The Commission addressed the cross-cutting nature of science, technology and innovation through a sectoral analysis of their impact on sustainable development. In 2017, it had focused on food security, and in 2019, it would examine the impact of frontier technologies, with particular emphasis on the implications for developing countries. The Commission would continue to promote sharing examples of good practices with a view to identifying effective policy measures that enabled science, technology and innovation to contribute to sustainable development.

67. With respect to gender, the Gender Advisory Board had been established in 1995, and the Commission had always promoted integrating a gender perspective in science, technology and innovation policy throughout the entire process, including assessment, policy design, implementation, capacity-building, monitoring and follow-up. In addition, the Commission had consistently applied a gender lens to its priority themes. For example, with regard to the theme on renewable energy, the Commission had emphasized the urgent need to deploy alternatives to the traditional use of bioenergy for cooking and had provided a platform to showcase related technologies and international initiatives, such as the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, which played an important role in addressing those challenges.

68. **Mr. Bouchaara** (Morocco), Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, said that addressing the specific needs of women in crime prevention and criminal justice had been highlighted in a number of resolutions adopted by the Commission, as well as in the outcome document of the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. For example, the Commission had adopted resolutions on action against the gender-related killing of women and girls, on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in prisons, and on mainstreaming a gender perspective into crime prevention and criminal justice policies and programmes and into efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime. In a recent resolution on the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, Member States had called for mainstreaming crime prevention strategies with a gender perspective into all relevant social and economic policies and programmes and adopting integrated and comprehensive responses to violence against women to ensure equal protection under the law and equal access to justice. The resolution also called on UNODC to assist Member States in improving systems for collecting and analysing data on crime prevention and criminal justice at all levels, including gender-specific data. In addition, UNODC promoted access to justice for women and girls, provided guidance for policymakers and practitioners and supported the development of legislation and policies that prevented violence against women and girls and protected their rights.

69. With regard to partnerships, addressing crime in all its forms required a comprehensive approach, and the Commission highly valued the contributions of all relevant stakeholders, including United Nations entities and specialized agencies, regional organizations and civil society. It worked closely with the institutes of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network, which had been established to assist the international community in strengthening cooperation. The Commission also called on relevant entities of the United Nations system to continue coordinating their activities in order to promote a more integrated approach to providing assistance for capacity-building on criminal justice reform.

70. **Mr. Yaakob** (Observer for Malaysia), Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests, said that the sustainable management of forests required integrated approaches to land-use planning and decision-making within and across sectors, as well as participatory and transparent mechanisms to maximize long-term benefits to communities. In that regard, important cross-cutting issues, such as gender mainstreaming, the empowerment of women and girls, partnership and good governance, had been fully integrated into the mandates and activities of the Forum, particularly in the global targets of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. For example, targets under global forest goal 5, on promoting governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda, called on all relevant stakeholders to advance coherent and cross-sectoral national and subnational forest policies. Global forest goal 6, on enhancing cooperation, coordination and synergy on forest-related issues at all levels, required the involvement of all relevant major groups and stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic plan and in the work of the Forum. At the inter-agency level, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, established in 2001, consisted of 15 international forest-related organizations and aimed to promote the implementation of the strategic plan and other international forest-related goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

71. Mainstreaming gender issues was an integral part of the work of the Forum. The strategic plan specifically recognized the importance of action by all stakeholders, including women. The role of gender equality and empowerment in its implementation had been emphasized in recent resolutions of the Forum, including in relation to the activities of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network. The communication and outreach strategy of the strategic plan, adopted by the Forum at its most recent session, also required due consideration to be given to gender issues in promoting public awareness and actions on forests.

72. **Ms. Grignon** (Observer for Kenya), Vice-Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, said that achieving gender equality required the mobilization and

participation of a number of actors. The Commission therefore provided an annual opportunity for gender equality advocates from Governments, civil society, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to come together to celebrate progress, renew commitments, prioritize challenges and concerns and chart the way forward. Stakeholders at the national level participated in preparatory work and regional meetings prior to the meetings of the Commission. In addition, government delegations sometimes included representatives of non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, national human rights institutions and women and girls from rural areas to ensure inclusivity and broad-based participation.

73. The outcomes of the Commission, in particular the agreed conclusions, tasked Governments with undertaking concrete actions, making necessary investments in women and girls and prioritizing key interventions to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. The Commission also encouraged the participation of a broad range of other actors, including youth-led and faith-based organizations, feminist groups and the private sector. The programme of the sixty-second session of the Commission had included women's organizations as well as producer, agricultural and fisheries organizations, specifically those based in rural areas. Such broad participation enriched the work of the Commission, promoted collaboration and partnerships beyond its sessions and facilitated the implementation of gender equality commitments at the national and regional levels.

74. The Commission also acted as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming. Through the use of a thematic and sectoral approach to the situation of women and girls, the Commission demonstrated that policies relating to macroeconomics, trade, energy, science and technology were gender-sensitive rather than gender-neutral, given that they impacted women and men differently as a result of structural gender inequalities and systemic discrimination. Through its work, the Commission highlighted the steps that were needed to prevent and eliminate those barriers. Related policies, investments and interventions were facilitated by the availability of data that was disaggregated on the basis of gender.

75. **Mr. Xu** Zhongsheng (China) said that the Vice-Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had mentioned that science and technology could facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. However, many developing countries felt that emerging frontier technologies had widened the gap between developed and developing countries. He wondered how the catalytic role of memorandums of intent could be strengthened to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

76. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that it was important to have dialogue and build bridges between the various functional commissions of the Council. In that connection, Mexico had promoted resolutions on gender perspectives in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the recent agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women had called on Member States to adhere to the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders. Furthermore, dialogue should be maintained, not just among the Chairs of the commissions, but also among delegations in the various United Nations offices in order to benefit from the contributions made in other bodies. For example, the issue of rapid technological change had recently been discussed in a number of forums, including the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals. New technologies must be harnessed so that Member States could achieve the Goals.

77. **Ms. Vives Balmaña** (Andorra) said that the round table allowed participants to better understand the work of the commissions and how it could support the timely achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. While her delegation welcomed the integration of a gender perspective in nearly all commissions, the digital divide between genders and countries gave cause for concern. She wondered how to close that gap, given that it had been widening for nearly 20 years.

78. Discussions within the Commission on the Status of Women demonstrated that the persistent issue of violence and systemic discrimination against women greatly hampered their ability to flourish. It would be interesting to hear the views of the representatives of the commissions in that regard.

79. **Ms. Premchit** (Observer for Thailand) said that the vast knowledge and specialization of the functional commissions and the core work of the coordination and management meetings allowed the Council to build on its strengths and more efficiently support Member States in advancing sustainable development. One such example was the resolution on the strategic framework for geospatial information and services for disasters, which had been adopted by the Council in the previous meeting and which Thailand had sponsored. The framework, which was forward-looking and action-oriented, had been developed by the Statistical Commission, through its Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.

80. Building sustainable and resilient societies in all aspects in the long term required availability of data and investment in information management. The international community must therefore continue to collaborate, build capacity and share best practices in order to produce high-quality, timely and reliable data, which would help to translate commitments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals into concrete actions and tangible results on the ground.

81. **Ms. Grignon** (Observer for Kenya), Vice-Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, said that some of the issues related to closing the technological gap could be addressed by dealing with violence against women. It was a matter of creating legal, institutional and policy frameworks that specifically targeted women, as well as investing sufficient funds in the necessary gender-specific interventions. Education and access were also essential to closing the technological gap. In addition, the Council was making structural changes and raising awareness about technology transfer and other difficult issues.

82. The Commission had proactively reached out and exchanged information and ideas with other functional commissions. Expanded cooperation across the Council supported a more harmonized and coordinated approach, which was critical to guaranteeing a more gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. She was pleased that collaboration among the functional commissions was growing stronger every year and hoped that better coordination and partnerships would help put an end to silos within the United Nations.

83. **Ms. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico), Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, said that, since 2016, the Commission had enhanced its relationship with other functional commissions of the Council, particularly the Statistical Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women. In that connection, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on the Status of Women had held their most recent sessions simultaneously, connecting the meetings via video link. The round table provided an opportunity to enhance that cooperation and set the tone for future collaboration. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs could also further foster cooperation among Member States on capacity-building and assistance in implementing commitments.

84. **Mr. Santaella** (Mexico), Vice-Chair of the Statistical Commission, speaking via video link from Mexico City, said that technological gaps must be measured before they could be closed. Statistics therefore played an important role in identifying such gaps.

85. The Commission had been working to integrate geospatial information with statistical information, and the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management was coordinating work to locate many of the people that needed to be reached in order to achieve the goal of leaving no one behind.

86. **Mr. Major** (Observer for Hungary), Vice-Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, said that new technologies did, in fact, risk increasing the gap between developed and developing countries, and the international community was losing the battle in leaving no one behind. The Commission must move beyond assessing that problem and play an active role in addressing it. It had therefore created a space for international cooperation that allowed Member States to share their experiences, explore opportunities for learning and build partnerships. For example, during the most recent session of the Commission, the Government of China had offered capacity-building, training and research opportunities to scientists and policymakers from developing countries.

87. In 2017, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had participated in each other's meetings. The round table brought the commissions closer together and raised issues that had not been addressed in their silos. He hoped that the collaboration would extend beyond the round-table discussion.

88. **Mr. Bouchaara** (Morocco), Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, said that, with regard to legislation, the Commission had made significant progress in promoting gender equality. However, in practice, there was still a gap. For example, during the recent session of the Commission, none of the regional groups had nominated women to serve as panellists. In order to address that issue, the functional commissions of the Council should ensure a gender balance in every panel.

89. With regard to collaboration between commissions, it was important to preserve the unique working culture of each commission while building bridges between them. The distance between New York and Vienna must not hinder collaboration, and commissions must learn to consult one another regularly on relevant issues. Furthermore, functional commissions that were not headquartered in New York needed to be consulted and included in discussions concerning reforms to the United Nations and the Council. While the round table provided an opportunity to share experiences, the commissions must also find a way to have more detailed and regular consultation.

90. **Mr. Yaakob** (Observer for Malaysia), Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests, said that the commissions must take a more coordinated approach and harmonize their work, as they clearly dealt with overlapping issues. In that connection, the high-level political forum played a valuable role.

91. With regard to addressing gender issues, the Forum asked Member States to provide voluntary national contributions in order to assist them in determining how to achieve targets under the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, which included narrowing the gender gap.

92. **The President** urged participants to incorporate the information, insights and evidence provided by the commissions into their work at the forthcoming high-level political forum.

93. **Ms. Regnér** (Deputy Executive Director of Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that the round table made visible issues relating to gender equality that might otherwise have been overlooked and confirmed the value added of collaboration with the functional commissions. In order to implement measures that worked, there must be progress in all Sustainable Development Goals. To that end, United Nations entities must collect and analyse data and identify injustices in order to address them.

94. The systematic review of the Sustainable Development Goals by the high-level political forum provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to benefit from inputs and recommendations. A gender perspective should be mainstreamed in the development of all national sustainable development policies, planning, processes and budgets to ensure gender-responsive procurement, expenditures and design in maintaining and expanding public services. Women's use of time and space must be given consideration with a view to ensuring that their disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work could be explicitly addressed, as well as examining how men could share in those tasks.

95. The UN-Women report, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, examined the 17 Goals through a gender lens and highlighted the action needed to achieve them. It illustrated significant gaps within countries and among women owing to their income, status, race, ethnicity or location, and provided recommendations for change. In combatting gender inequalities, other social and economic inequalities were combatted as well. The high-level political forum could make a real difference to ensure that no one was left behind and that those with the greatest needs were reached first.

96. The 25-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to be conducted in 2020, presented an opportunity for the functional commissions to deepen their contributions to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. That process had been launched in June 2018 and would involve comprehensive reviews at the national level and regional events. A high-level meeting of the General Assembly in 2020 was also recommended. The review would highlight the links between the implementation of the Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations E/2018/SR.43

Economic and Social Council

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2018 session
27 July 2017 to 26 July 2018
Second coordination and management meeting

Summary record of the 43rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 3 July 2018, at 10 a.m.

President: Ms. King (Vice-President) ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

Contents

Agenda item 14: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

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18-10977 (E)

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 14: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/73/70; E/2018/56; E/2018/L.17)

1. **Mr. Webson** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda) Chair, Special Committee on Decolonization, drawing attention to the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/73/70) and to the report of the President of the Economic and Social Council contained in document E/2018/56, said that the 2018 Pacific regional seminar had been held in Grenada in May under the theme "Implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: social, economic and environmental challenges". He expressed appreciation to the agencies, funds and programmes and organizations that had provided assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, as reflected in document E/2018/56, and requested them to strengthen existing measures and formulate appropriate new programmes for accelerating economic and social progress in those Territories.

Draft resolution E/2018/L.17: Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations

2. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

3. **Mr. Webson** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda) Chair, Special Committee on Decolonization, introduced the draft resolution.

4. **Mr. Bagwell** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his delegation would abstain from voting on the draft resolution. It agreed in principle that United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies could provide useful support to territories that were not members of the Organization. However, the domestic laws and policies of a territory's administering Power determined whether such support was allowed, and the language in the draft resolution was inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States of America, which gave the Federal Government sole authority for the conduct of foreign relations.

5. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested.

6. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution E/2018/L.17.*

In favour:

Azerbaijan, Belarus, Chile, China, Ecuador, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Belgium, Canada, Czechia, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

7. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.17 was adopted by 15 votes to none, with 12 abstentions.*

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.